

Westminster & City News

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TUESDAY JANUARY 17 2017



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WHEN OUR NICKY MET GARY AND TIM



A group of synchronised swimmers took the plunge in Westminster to support the fight against homelessness. Members of the Seymour Synchro Swim School strapped on their colourful headwear before making a splash at Porchester Pool as part of the St Mungo's charity's Woolly Hat Day. Londoners are being encouraged to pop on a hat for the awareness event, which takes place on Friday January 27

Mum: I was powerless to help my mentally ill son

FOR more than eight years Doreen High felt unable to talk about her son Ricky's tragic death.

While Ricky, pictured, wrestled with complex mental-health problems, she felt lost, alone and powerless to help him.

In an exclusive interview with *London Weekly News* reporter Jack Dixon as part of our Change Is Possible mental-health awareness campaign, Doreen tells her story for the first time.



See Page 10

Death-plunge fears rise as council backs 'sport'

Authority gives official recognition to urban craze parkour

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

A GYMNASTIC urban craze which can involve jumping off buildings and leaping between rooftops has been officially recognised as a new sport and welcomed by Westminster City Council.

Although at least 10 youngsters died in horrific falls while practising parkour, or freerunning, the UK has become the first country in the world to officially give it sport status – and sports minister Tracey Crouch urged “give it a go”.



A demonstration of parkour

But as the sport is introduced into schools and is being keenly encouraged by the Westminster

authorities, fears are growing that young Londoners will be putting their life at risk.

The Home Country Sports Council last week approved Parkour UK's application for recognition of the sport.

And Mrs Crouch and Sebastian Foucan, president of Parkour UK, announced the formal recognition at LEAP Parkour Park, England's largest outdoor parkour facility at the Westminster Academy.

The park was launched by Westminster City Council in partnership with Parkour UK in 2012.

“Parkour, also known as freerunning, is the non-competitive physical discipline of training to move freely over and through any terrain using only the abilities of the body, principally through running, jumping, climbing and quadrupedal movement,” said a spokesman for Westminster City Council.

“In practice it focuses on developing the fundamental attributes required for such movement, which include functional strength and fitness, balance, spatial aware-

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Hammersmith

CHRONICLE

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TUESDAY JANUARY 17 2017



WHEN OUR NICKY MET GARY AND TIM

Tributes will be paid to a "remarkable" Hammersmith soldier who was honoured with the Victoria Cross for his bravery on the battlefield 100 years ago. A unique ceremony is to be held in memory of First World War hero L/Sgt Frederick Palmer next month. Palmer was awarded the Victoria Cross for his courageous efforts in the face of unimaginable horrors on the front line. Full story on Page 3



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See Page 10



Council tax frozen for second year running

Borough's residents 'set to be among only people in country not to face rising bills'

BY JACK DIXON
jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

COUNCIL-TAX bills will be frozen in Hammersmith and Fulham for a second successive year, town-hall bosses have confirmed.

The commitment not to lift the charge comes despite huge cuts to local-authority budgets.

Residents in Hammersmith and Fulham are set to be among the only people in the country who won't face rising bills this year, according to councillors.

Most councils are set to hike rates by up to four per cent in an effort to keep essential services on track.

Hammersmith and Fulham council said it could afford the freeze because it had made millions of pounds' worth of savings

in its senior management and public-relations teams as well as renegotiating property deals with developers.

But Tory councillors claimed the council-tax deal was a "complete rip-off" compared to other London boroughs.

Council leader Stephen Cowan said the Labour administration was taking a "hard-nosed" approach to finances in the face of "unprecedented pressure" on local services.

He said: "We know how tough times have got for our residents, which is why I'm pleased that we're the most effective council-tax-cutting administration in the country."

Home-care charges for the elderly and disabled have been abolished in Hammersmith and Ful-

ham despite government pressure to raise taxes to cover the cost of adult social care.

The price of meals-on-wheels services has also been slashed, from £4.50 to £2 in the last two years.

The council said it had saved almost £200 million from cost-cutting measures and that the money would be put towards local services and house-building programmes.

Cllr Cowan said: "We've done this against a backdrop of punitive measures by the government.

"This is putting unprecedented pressure on local services, particularly on care for elderly and disabled residents. But it is exactly those people who are hit hardest by council-tax rises."

The band-D charge for a typical ratepayer is set to be frozen at

£727.81 at a meeting next month.

Total bill will be just over £1,000 once the Greater London Authority precept is added to the charge.

John O'Connell, chief executive of the Taxpayers' Alliance, welcomed the move and said frozen bills would ease the burden on hard-pressed families.

But Conservative councillors argued the Labour administration had not gone far enough to reduce bills. Cllr Greg Smith, leader of the opposition, said: "Having said they would cut tax, Labour's efforts are proving pathetic compared to the Conservatives' record of cutting council-tax bills by 20 per cent between 2006 and 2014.

"Residents will rightly see their council tax as a complete rip-off compared to nearby Wandsworth and Westminster."

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DIRECTORS
Philip Evans

07796 951991

Hannah Walker

020 883 59721

Tim Dixon (Editor)

07739300485

Editorial email
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

News Editor Geoff Baker 07864 992274

Reporter Jack Dixon 07973 565078

Sport - Tony MacDonald 07711 169427

Advertising
Sales Executive

 Seniha Slowinski 0208 768 4930 /
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Trades/

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U2 set for Twickenham Stadium date – page 18

I should have left school at 14, admits plumbing magnate



A truant as a boy, Charlie Mullins went on to become one of Britain's most respected businessmen, with clients said to include David Craig

MOST nine-year-old boys spend their days dreaming of life as an astronaut or racing driver, a doctor, policeman or musician. But Charlie Mullins wanted to be a plumber.

Even though he was barely beyond the playground, the now business tycoon and founder of iconic London firm Pimlico Plumbers knew there was money in the pipes waiting to be made.

Idolising his local fix-it man who – it seemed to Charlie, at least – led a life of great luxury and wealth, he began bunking off school.

But rather than skipping classes to pop down to the sweet shop or run off for a kickabout in the park, the young Charlie was earning two bob a day helping to bodge sinks, tubs and toilets.

When he left school with no qualifications at the age of 15 – he admits this was a big mistake, he should have left at 14 – little did he know he would go on to become one of Britain's most respected businessmen.

After completing a four-year apprenticeship in the trade, Charlie found himself a second-hand van and a bag of tools.

In 1979, he started Pimlico Plumbers from the basement of a Central London estate agent. His

vision was simple. "I set out to change the image of the plumbing industry and get rid of the stigma associated with it," he recalls, "plumbers who turn up late driving rusty old vans, not wearing uniform, arses hanging out of their trousers, bad workmanship and ripping off the customer."

Charlie gradually built a formidable plumbing empire and the business now ranks as London's single biggest independent plumbing and service company.

With a workforce of more than 350 people and a £35 million turnover, Charlie has used his celebrity to attract some of the biggest names around – Simon

Cowell, Daniel Craig and even Sir Richard Branson are said to be Pimlico clients.

Notoriously 'to the point', his business model is built on keeping things simple. His mantra is to do "the right job at the right price at the right time" for the customer.

But he puts a premium on hiring the right people and ensuring everyone is "drinking out of the same teapot".

"The way I run my business isn't rocket science, it's common sense," he explains. "The only problem is that common sense ain't that common."

Despite keeping a close eye on the day-to-day running of the firm, Charlie – now in his early 60s – has used his notoriety to campaign for change in the industry.

As patron of Women On The Tools – an initiative to encourage stronger female representation in plumbing – he has been at the forefront of changing the perception of tradespeople.

And with his involvement in last week's #MicroBizMattersDay social-media appeal, he continues to support young entrepreneurs who hope one day to follow in his footsteps.

"I've been fortunate enough to be in the position to be able to put something back into society by helping others," he says.

"The work that all the charities carry out is amazing and so many people in need benefit from them, which is very inspiring for everyone."

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Garden Bridge project may be falling down

BY GEOFF BAKER

geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

SADIQ Khan is being urged to ditch support for the Garden Bridge as spiralling costs raise fears that the tree-lined project could be falling down.

The call for the Mayor of London to "put the whole sorry saga to an end" came after trustees of the bridge warned it cannot be guaranteed as a "going concern".

However, the Garden Bridge Trust, the charity behind the planned bridge between Temple and the South Bank, says it still aims to go ahead and building will start later this year.

The Trust has revealed that a series of delays mean that costs are expected to "substantially exceed" the predicted £185 million.

The Trust's long-delayed accounts, published last week, show it spent just over £26 million in pre-construction costs during the 17 months covered by the figures, 80 per cent of which came from public money via Transport for London (TfL).

But the accounts show that over the same period the Trust raised just £13 million in new private donations for the bridge, which was first suggested by actress Joanna Lumley and is planned to feature 270 trees and thousands

of plants.

In his introduction to the accounts, Trust chairman Mervyn Davies warned that the project faced "challenges that must be resolved before construction of the garden bridge can start".

The challenges include securing final planning consents for the south end of the bridge, securing a guarantee from London authorities for future maintenance costs and raising more private money, including funds that can be spent immediately.

He continued: "Due to the material uncertainties in existence ahead of finalising these accounts, trustees are unable to conclude that the trust is a going concern, and feel it only appropriate to flag these risks in this report."

Now Caroline Pidgeon, the Liberal Democrat member of the London Assembly, is calling on the Mayor of London to uproot the Garden Bridge project.

"Even advocates of the Garden Bridge with rose-tinted glasses will find these accounts incredibly concerning," said Ms Pidgeon.

"The Trust has finally admitted what most people have long expected was the case - that the final cost of the project is likely to increase substantially above the current £185 million predicted cost.

"The Trust is admitting for the second time



The proposed Garden Bridge across the Thames

that the costs of this project are spiralling upwards. That can only mean an even greater risk to the taxpayer ultimately picking up the costs of this folly of a project.

"The other admissions of the Garden Bridge Trust relating to a wide range of other risks are also significant and should concern every London taxpayer."

"The harsh reality is that the Garden Bridge is on the brink of collapse. The Mayor of London must now do the right thing. He should refuse to provide a taxpayer guarantee for the project and so put the whole sorry saga

to an end."

However, the Mayor is unlikely to scrap the bridge as he has previously argued that cancelling the project would cause a write-off of £40 million of taxpayers' money which has already gone to it.

In a statement released with the accounts the Garden Bridge Trust said: "The trustees are duty bound to disclose these risks and how we intend to deal with them, in this report. We strongly believe we can progress all outstanding issues and we are determined to make the project happen."

Area in serious danger of losing its small companies, says new research



INDUSTRY leaders have warned that Westminster is "in serious danger of losing its small businesses" after new research has revealed that small business confidence has dropped 28 points from this time last year.

The Federation of Small Businesses' London Small Business Index (LSBI), which measures confidence among businesses, has a reading of -3 which is a marked decrease in the level from this time last year when it stood at +25.

The fears for their future comes after 63 per cent of businesses reported that they have seen an overall increase in the cost of running their business operations in the past quarter compared to five per cent who have seen a decrease.

The LSBI shows:

- The general economic conditions in the UK, getting appropriately skilled staff and consumer demand remain the greatest perceived barriers to growth over the coming twelve months.
- 44 per cent of businesses said that gross profits have decreased in the past three months, compared to 27 per cent who said there had been an increase
- Only 13 per cent have seen the value of their exports increase compared to 61 per cent in 2015.
- 42 per cent expect wage growth to be above 2 per cent in the next twelve months.

The Federation of Small Businesses will be meeting with the Minister for London, Gavin Barwell, this week to argue how the cost of doing business in London is weighing down on micro and small firms, making them less competitive compared to their counterparts in other parts of the country.

The FSB London Policy Unit will urge the Government to address swingeing business rate increases and the Policy of Permitted Development Rights:

"The Government needs to reconsider its policy of relaxing the conversion of office space to residential space through permitted development rights - before it becomes a London crisis similar to Housing," said a FSB spokesman.

"The Government should also create an increased inner and outer London Small business rate relief threshold that reflects the specific problems faced by small businesses in the capital. In inner London we are calling for the threshold should be £20,000 rateable value for 100 per cent relief tapering to £23,000.

"In outer London where rateable values have increased by a lower percentage, we believe the threshold for 100 per cent relief should be set at £15,000 tapering to £18,000.

FSB London Chair Sue Terpilowski said: "London is in serious danger of losing its vital support system of micro and small businesses.

"The business attraction of London is that it has a strong ecosystem of support services from the micro and small business community. Some of these businesses are the ones that become high growth companies from a standing start, often in the high-tech sectors.

"We must ensure that this support system remains in place to keep the UK economy and the London economy thriving. We need to realise that the hard costs of operating a business in the capital are starting to outweigh the benefits which simply does not make economic sense - and so tacking these burdens early in 2017 is critical."

Theatre apprenticeships

LONDON theatres are offering new apprenticeships to young people seeking careers in the spotlight.

The London Theatre Consortium of 14 leading theatres has announced plans for a fourth year of its apprenticeship programme offering up to a further 12 apprenticeships across the group this year.

In a new development, the LTC will work with the National College for the Creative and Cultural Industries to offer the apprenticeship qualifications and will pilot a new apprenticeship training hub at the Lyric Hammersmith.

The announcement comes as the consortium published a new report on the programme's first three years which sets out how an investment of £800,000 has created 56 entry level apprenticeships into theatre across a broad range of disciplines including Technical Theatre, Costume, Community Arts, Venue Operations, Producing and Administration.

"The report shows how apprenticeships can help arts organisations to diversify their workforces and to create new routes into a career in theatre," said a LTC spokeswoman.

"Sixty two per cent of apprentices to date have been from non white-British backgrounds and 27 per cent have a disability, most hidden.

"The programme was also effective in reaching people from socio-economic backgrounds that are not currently well represented in theatre staff teams.

"All apprentices were paid at least the adult National Minimum Wage, regardless of their age, to make sure that no one was barred from taking a role for financial reasons."

As well as college and workplace training towards an accredited qualification, apprentices were given mentoring support, help to plan their careers and next steps and provided with opportunities to build their contacts and networks.

Of 48 apprenticed, 23 have gone on to further employment in the arts and 11 will shortly complete their Level 2 qualifications.

"Apprentices reported that their self-confidence, organisational skills and work readiness improved enormously. Employers reported that managing an apprentice had encouraged them to reconsider their standard working practices to support better inclusivity and access," said the spokeswoman.

The programme has been co-funded by CC-Skills' Creative Employment Programme,

AGE, City Bridge Foundation, LTC employers and the LTC itself.

LTC Director Emma Rees said: "We worked really hard to find talented young people who we don't usually hear from when we are recruiting.

"Almost everyone working in the arts will say at some point that they owe their position to someone who saw something in them and believed in them. That's brilliant if you're there to be 'spotted' but impossible if you'd never find yourself in that position in the first place.

"We decided we needed to be proactive and to go out and look for talent and potential - and we found it."

Sam Maynard, education manager of Donmar Warehouse, added: "Working with apprentices makes me question a lot of practice that is taken as read within the organisation, and I think that is a really good thing for the culture of an organisation."

Sian Alexander, Executive Director of the Lyric Hammersmith, said: "The cultural sector is a real UK success story in terms of growth and economic development and London is one of the most multi-cultural cities in the world, yet the workforce of the theatre sector is still under-representative of London's diversity.

"From the start, we have seen this collaborative programme as an important way to diversify the workforce, to reach and train young people from backgrounds that are currently underrepresented in the theatre sector.

"Working together has been key to this. I don't think the London theatres could have embraced apprenticeships on the scale that they have, and with the success they have, if it hadn't been for that collaborative approach, as part of the London Theatre Consortium.

"Although the funding climate makes it harder now, we are committed to continuing to work together to maintain the momentum we have achieved and to create open and accessible opportunities for talented young people from all backgrounds in our theatres."

Recruitment for the fourth year of apprenticeships has now begun, with apprenticeships starting in March 2017. More details are available from www.londontheatreconsortium.com

Man, 83, found after four days

POLICE tracked down an elderly man who went missing from his home in Fulham for four days.

Loy Fat Wong, 83, disappeared on January 3 but was found safe and well on January 7.

Metropolitan Police officers launched a public appeal for information after concerns were raised for his safety.

Detectives thanked members of the public for their help to publicise the appeal on social media.

Free workshop for filmmakers

HAMMERSMITH United Charities is offering a free film-making workshop for budding cinematographers.

Participants will enjoy a masterclass from experts at the production company Rainbow Collective.

The event follows HUC's successful film festival last year, which encouraged members of the community to make their own moving pictures.

The workshop takes place at Sycamore House on Friday January 27 between 1pm and 4pm. For more information and tickets, visit bit.ly/2icjVJh.

Screen-staring takes 117 days

PEOPLE living in Hammersmith and Fulham are spending half their leisure time looking at computer or television screens, according to new research.

The average Londoner will spend 117 days a year staring at screens – compared to only four days exercising.

The findings came from a survey commissioned by furniture company Distinctive Chesterfields.

It also found that Londoners were the least social people in the UK, skipping around one in three social events in favour of time in front of the television.

TV star sparks row on internet

TV and radio presenter Jeremy Vine sparked a social-media row after posting video footage of a road-rage incident online.

More than 200 comments were left on the broadcaster's Facebook page in relation to the clip, which showed a near miss between a cyclist and a driver. The footage was caught on a camera attached to the presenter's helmet as he cycled along Hammersmith Road.

Mr Vine, who hosts a weekday show on BBC Radio 2 and is known to cycle to work across West London, caused a similar storm last year after being involved in a road-rage row in Kensington.

Walking tour

A HAMMERSMITH musician and David Bowie fan is organising special tours to commemorate the singer's life.

Nick Stephenson launched the tours in Bowie's hometown Brixton last week, coinciding with the first anniversary of the pop star's death.

The tours, on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, guide visitors through the landmarks of Bowie's life.



Flashback to the 2014 event Pictures: Fulham FC Foundation

Craven Cottage 10k returns

FITNESS fanatics and charity fundraisers will be strapping on their running shoes to take part in the Craven Cottage 10k race next month.

Fulham Football Club has confirmed that the annual winter event is due to take place on February 26.

Ex-Whites hero Sean Davis will return to his former stomping ground to fire the starting gun.

The runners will head off

from Craven Cottage before crossing Hammersmith Bridge, looping around Wandsworth and back along the south bank of the Thames.

Competitors then cross Putney Bridge and trek through Bishop's Park before finishing back in the grounds of the stadium.

All proceeds from the event are going towards the Fulham FC Foundation to support its various community projects.

The organisation uses the power of sport and education to improve the life of people living in the borough.

Stuart Farmer, who was first across the finish line at last year's event in a time of 34 minutes and 39 seconds, said: "It was great to see such a strong turnout of runners. I ran this race the previous year and it is always special to finish a race in a historic stadium such as Craven Cottage."

Paving-stone memorial to First World War hero

BY JACK DIXON

jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

TRIBUTES will be paid to a "remarkable" Hammersmith soldier who was honoured for his bravery on the battlefield 100 years ago.

A unique ceremony is to be held in memory of First World War hero L/Sgt Frederick Palmer next month.

Palmer was awarded the Victoria Cross for his courageous efforts in the face of unimaginable horrors on the front line.

In the midst of the conflict in northern France, Palmer gathered a small team of comrades and stormed an enemy trench.

Despite losing all the senior officers in his company to machine-gun fire, the 25-year-old took command and held the captured trench against wave after wave of enemy attacks.

Palmer, who was born in Hammersmith on November 11 1891, was presented with the military's highest honour for gallantry – one of nine medals he received during a distinguished career.

Records reveal that Palmer was praised for his "very conspicuous bravery" on the battlefield.

The King's citation, read at the ceremony, said: "His splendid determination and devotion to duty



First World War hero L/Sgt Frederick Palmer VC

undoubtedly averted what might have proved a serious disaster."

A century on from his death-defying heroics, Palmer is to be recognised once again.

The mayor of Hammersmith and Fulham, Cllr Mercy Umeh, will lead a special service marking the 100th anniversary of the battle.

A paving stone is to be laid at the Shepherd's Bush war memorial on Shepherd's Bush Green in Palmer's memory.

Several members of Palmer's

family, including his son and grandson, are expected to attend the ceremony on February 17 – 100 years to the day since his extraordinary act of bravery.

Cllr Alan De'Ath, Hammersmith and Fulham's representative for the Armed Forces, paid special tribute to Palmer last week.

He said: "The bravery that L/Sgt Palmer showed on that battlefield a century ago still resonates today."

"It is humbling to remember the selfless valour he displayed and it is fitting that we pause to pay tribute to a remarkable man and to express our gratitude to all those who have died defending our country and our freedom."

After the First World War, Palmer joined the Royal Flying Corps before moving to Malaya in the 1920s to set up a planting business.

He returned to England at the outbreak of the Second World War and rejoined the RAF, flying in the Battle of Britain and earning the rank of wing commander.

He retired to Hampshire in 1950 and died in 1955, leaving a widow, three sons and a daughter.

The memorial service takes place on Shepherd's Bush Green on Friday February 17 at 11am.

Mental-health plans 'huge opportunity' for improved lives

AMBITIOUS new plans to overhaul the mental-health system have created a "huge opportunity" to improve the life of thousands of people in Hammersmith and Fulham, according to NHS bosses.

Experts said a government drive to tackle mental illness could pave the way for a "step change" in quality of care.

But health chiefs also warned that the NHS alone could not tackle the problem and that schools, employers and "wider society" all had a role to play.

The comments came from the Cavendish Square Group – the body representing the 10 NHS trusts responsible for mental-health services in London – after Prime Minister Theresa May unveiled the government's action plan to fight stigma and discrimination within the system.

Mrs May set out proposals to invest an extra £15 million in community care, while improving mental-health training for teachers and employers.

The policy announcement could have a life-changing impact on the two million Londoners – including thousands in Hammersmith and Fulham – who experience mental ill health every year.

The Cavendish Square Group, which includes the West London Mental Health Trust, said it was encouraged by indications that ministers would seek to address services for children and young people.

It also welcomed the government's proposals to improve workplace conditions and urged ministers to "hold employers to account" where discrimination occurs.

But it warned of historic underfunding of the mental-health system and called for a "sustained commitment to increase resources".

Crucially, it said the NHS alone could not provide the kind of mental-health services that would be more suitably delivered by schools and employers.

The group said: "We do not underestimate the financial resources needed to deliver a mentally healthy society but it is not all about money."

"We all have a responsibility to work together to build better systems and services to assist people and communities in supporting themselves, and to receive high-quality, safe and responsive services when they need them."

In her speech, the Prime Minister outlined plans for:

- an extra £15 million for community care services, such as crisis cafes;
- every secondary school to be offered mental-health first-aid training;
- a review of children and adolescent mental-health services;
- additional training for employers to support staff who need to take time off.

The announcement follows a fundraising and awareness campaign by the *London Weekly News* to raise the profile of mental-health issues.

The Change Is Possible appeal has so far raised more than £5,000 to support vital mental-health services in the capital.

It is also shining a light on stigma and inequality within the system, while demonstrating the positive efforts being made to tackle the problems.

If you would like to support our Change Is Possible appeal, you can donate at giveyou.com/changeispossible or contact reporter Jack Dixon on 07973 565078 or at jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk.



Change Is Possible campaigners Ed Francis, Ajay Khandelwal and Olivia Stephens collecting towards our appeal in the run-up to Christmas

Council recognises urban craze as sport

FROM PAGE 1

ness, agility, co-ordination, precision, control and creative vision.

"Parkour motivates people to get active. Participants can take part in the sport whenever and wherever they want, without needing to meticulously manage their busy diaries, buy special equipment, join a club, or book a pitch or court. All you need is a pair of trainers and your imagination to #GiveParkourAGo!

"Recognition will enable parkour groups and organisations affiliated to Parkour UK to apply to the home-country sports councils for lottery or exchequer funding to support the development of the sport locally in each home nation."

But the council's ringing endorsement of parkour failed to mention that many of its teenage enthusiasts, known as traceurs, jump between rooftops and across trains and a worrying number have died after misjudging their leaps – two were aged only 13.

Mrs Crouch did not mention the incidence of parkour deaths at the launch last week, when she said: "I want people to get out there and find the sport and physical activity that appeals to them and parkour is certainly a fun, creative and innovative option."

"I am pleased it has been recognised as a sport, giving it the platform for further growth in this country, with Parkour UK as its governing body. The sport promotes movement and using the great outdoors as a space to get active in and I encourage people to don their trainers and give it a go."

Mr Foucan said: "This is brilliant recognition for a discipline that started off as child's play with my friends almost 30 years ago. The beauty of parkour is that everyone, of all ages, can do it respectfully in almost any environment. We celebrate activity and playfulness while constantly challenging our mental and physical limits. It is more than just jumping, it is a health-driven way of life."

Parkour has proved a health-driven way of death for some.

- In Russia in 2012 a 24-year-old woman fell 17 storeys to her death during her first parkour lesson.

- In Russia in 2013 a student plunged from 20 floors to his death while freerunning.

- In China in 2013 a parkour enthusiast died after falling from a 40m bridge.

- In Portugal in 2014, Hollywood stuntman Carlos Lopez, 25, died after falling while attempting to perform a parkour leap from a fifth-floor balcony to another building.

- In Greece in 2014 a 13-year-old boy died when he fell through a

skylight after doing parkour jumping on rooftops.

- In Russia in 2015 two more parkour deaths were recorded, one of a 17-year-old boy who plunged from a nine-storey building and another who fell from a crane.

- In the Ukraine in 2015 a 16-year-old boy fell 26 floors after a parkour stunt went wrong.

- Last year in Russia two more parkour enthusiasts died – a 20-year-old chessmaster plunged from a 12-storey building and a 13-year-old boy fell 100ft after dangling by his fingertips from the ninth floor of a tower block to impress his friends.

On New Year's Day in Paris, 17-year-old Nye Newman, of Guildford, died in an accident on the Metro. He was reported to be part of the Browman group, famed for the practice of train-surfing – jumping between the tops of trains. His friends have insisted that he was not train-surfing at the time of the tragedy.

Although authorities aim to restrict parkour to schools and purpose-built parks – of which there are now 50 across the UK – critics fear that in London, teenagers will copy the example of peers in other cities around the world and turn to extreme parkour across the city's rooftops.

Chris McGovern, chairman of Campaign for Real Education and a former Downing Street adviser, said that making parkour an offi-

cial sport was a barmy idea which would alarm many parents, especially if it is now encouraged in schools as a sport.

He said: "We need to promote sports in schools but this is not the answer. I don't think that parkour should be brought into schools."

"It's all right for stuntmen to do and I'm not concerned about that but that doesn't relate to a school environment. There are concerns about parkour because it involves children taking risks, like leaping between metro trains and jumping off rooftops, that are likely to kill them. It's intimidating for other people who are not doing it."

Mr McGovern said that introducing parkour into an urban environment like London would cause new dangers.

"We're going to hear about more accidents in London. People are going to get knocked over by others doing parkour," he said.

Mr McGovern said he was most concerned that if parkour is accepted in schools as a sport it could kill team-play as youngsters turn from football and rugby to the new craze which is all about the individual.

He said: "Introducing parkour into schools is a step too far. Schools won't encourage kids to jump from buildings – but that is what it leads to."

Despite the safety fears, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is not alarmed about the spread of parkour.

David Walker, leisure safety manager at RoSPA, said: "Parkour, just like climbing, mountain biking and other activities that encourage exploration, is inherently risky. But with the right measures in place and proper assessment of those risks, it can be undertaken in an environment that is as safe as necessary to prevent serious injuries. Having parkour recognised as a sport, with the establishment of a governing body, will help achieve this."

"Stunts such as train-surfing and jumping between tall buildings are not, according to parkour experts, considered part of the sport."

Official parkour organisations are also keen to calm fears of parents. On the worrying matter of people doing backflips off bridges and jumping across rooftops, website parkourtrain.net said: "Those things are dangerous if your child is not an expert. They are also not what most traceurs do on a regular basis."

"We recommend the gym for beginners to learn the basics of how to land properly, roll out of landings, jump with proper form and other fundamentals."

"The more we practise parkour, the more prepared our bodies become for real-life obstacles."

A spokesman for Westminster Council said: "Parkour UK works closely with partners to encourage and develop the safe and appropriate practice of parkour. The organisation also works with local groups, organisations, national organisations, local authorities and constabularies. Parkour UK has forged a close relationship with the education sector, developing programmes around videography and photography and cross-curricular links around the history and culture of the sport."

Chief executive at Parkour UK, Eugene Minogue, said: "Parkour has come a long way since first arriving in the UK in 2003. Parkour is now in the vast majority of primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities all over the UK."

Writing for you every week, London's most outspoken entrepreneur

Charlie pipes up!



Micro businesses, not big retailers, are the real heroes

THE New Year started well for the big retailers, Marks & Spencer, Debenhams and Tesco, who all posted positive Christmas trading statements.

They provide a good indicator for the state of the economy but more attention should be given to the performance of micro businesses, which account for 96 per cent of all registered businesses in the UK.

It's easy to applaud big business and give them top billing but five million micro businesses, providing 33 per cent of the UK's total employment, with limited resources, are the real heroes.

Established by entrepreneurial individuals, these businesses, which employ between one and nine people, are crucial to the success of our economy and should be afforded a lot more media coverage and support to help them reach their full potential.

Micro businesses and self-employment are on the up – but as markets become more saturated and big businesses flex their marketing muscles, it has become increasingly difficult for smaller businesses to compete.

In the UK, one in seven people are self-employed but are now earning 20 per cent less than they were in 2008. Therefore, it's essential to nurture and support these businesses.

One movement that is already well ahead of the curve is #MicroBizMattersDay, which was launched by the Enterprise Rockers in 2015.

It's an annual, international project, which, this year, took place on Friday and encouraged people to

give 13 minutes of their time to help out micro businesses.

It brought together more than one million micro and small business owners using the power of social media and included a physical event, which was broadcast through Google Hangouts, YouTube and Facebook Live.

The event was held at Pimlico Plumbers' Sail Street headquarters – my contribution to the movement – and enabled micro business owners to interact with and learn from well-known entrepreneurs including *The Apprentice* winner Tim Campbell MBE, founder of the MOBOs Kanya King MBE, indie label owner Sway and entrepreneur Chris Percival.

During the eight-hour event we discussed important challenges and opportunities facing micro businesses, shared best practice and answered questions from those tuned in, which hopefully gave the entrepreneurs in attendance a better chance of continuing their success.

I know from personal experience the difficulties of growing a business from the ground up, which is why I am so passionate about supporting micro businesses during the most difficult part of a business' journey.

It was encouraging to see the passion and innovation that exists in this community – the future certainly looks bright.

More attention needs to be given to support those that are looking to scale-up from modest beginnings.

As I often say, if you are more fortunate than others, it's better to build a larger table than a taller fence.

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of this newspaper



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SLOANE STREET

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Come along to one of our public exhibitions and find out more about our proposals to improve Sloane Street. Detailed technical information will be available and members of the project team will be on hand to discuss the proposed changes and answer questions.

When and where

The exhibition will be held at **129 Sloane Street, SW1X 9AT** on the following dates:

- **Thursday 26 January from 2pm to 8pm**
- **Friday 27 January from 10am to 2pm**
- **Saturday 28 January 10am to 2pm**
- **Saturday 4 February from 10am to 2pm**

If you have any questions, please email sloanestreet@rbkc.gov.uk or call **020 7361 3238**

www.rbkc.gov.uk/sloanestreet



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Campaigners slam 'foolish' plans for NHS

BY JACK DIXON

jack@londonweeklynnews.co.uk

HOSPITAL campaigners have slammed "foolish" plans for a shake-up of health services in Hammersmith and Fulham as official figures reveal the huge pressure on A&E services.

The number of A&E visits at Charing Cross Hospital shot up by almost eight per cent last summer compared to the year before.

Stretched response teams also faced a surge in the number of patients arriving by ambulance as well as an even bigger increase in the most serious emergency cases, known as type 1.

Data from the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust revealed the extent of the strain at Charing Cross from July to September last year.

Overall number of visits to the hospital's A&E department rose by 7.9 per cent compared to the same period in 2015.

The figures came as a new BBC documentary series, *Hospital*, exposed the day-to-day pressures facing staff at the trust's hospitals in north west London.



Local healthcare campaigners, who fear that Charing Cross Hospital could soon be closed as part of NHS cost-cutting plans, jumped on the figures last week.

Merril Hammer, chairman of the Save Our Hospitals group, said: "A key problem is that there are just not enough beds. Bed occupancy is at record levels – well above what's recommended. To talk about closing Charing Cross as an acute hospital is just plain irresponsible."

Cllr Stephen Cowan, leader of Hammersmith and Fulham council, said the Charing Cross A&E had seen a huge rise in demand since the emergency department at nearby Hammersmith Hospital was closed in 2014.

He said: "The plan to close the A&E at Charing Cross is

foolish. These figures show how vital it is to the growing population of West London."

For the month of October, the Imperial trust fell short of the government target to treat 95 per cent of A&E patients within four hours of their arrival at hospital. Only 87 per cent received treatment within the four-hour window.

Last summer, the number of serious type 1 A&E visits increased by 12.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2015.

The trust has consistently denied that there are plans to close Charing Cross Hospital within the five-year timeframe of the NHS 'sustainability and transformation plan'.

A spokesman said: "Unfortunately, there are very similar pressures in A&E departments across England.

"The causes are complex and include increasing demand as well as challenges in discharging patients who have completed their hospital treatment but need ongoing care and support at home or in the community.

"We recently gave a public reassurance that there will be no reduction in Charing Cross Hospital's A&E unless and until we are able to reduce demand through out-of-hospital services, and that any plans must be developed with local communities.

"With the support of Imperial College Healthcare Charity, we are currently making significant improvements to a range of facilities at Charing Cross, including A&E, acute medicine, outpatients and theatres."



Professor Tim Orchard

Better care available off-ward for one in three patients – health boss

ONE in three patients occupying hospital beds in West London could be better cared for outside wards, according to a senior health boss.

Professor Tim Orchard, director of medicine and integrated health at the Imperial NHS Trust, said care at home, in rehabilitation units or at nursing homes would be more suitable for many patients.

The trust is responsible for running Charing Cross and Hammersmith hospitals in Hammersmith and

Fulham, as well as St Mary's, Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea, and the Western Eye Hospital.

Prof Orchard made the comments in a blog post after appearing in an episode of the BBC's new documentary series *Hospital*, which goes behind the scenes at the trust to uncover the pressures facing the health service.

He said efforts to make hospital services more streamlined were unlikely to be enough to respond fully to "changing needs"

in care and treatment. "There's a growing consensus that the only sustainable solution is to move towards a more integrated health and social care system," he said.

"We have to make the shift from care being reactive and crisis-driven to actively working to keep people as healthy as possible. Regardless of which bit of the 'system' they are in, patients have to feel in control of their own care – and it needs to be joined-up and consistent."

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
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Motorway death: Police believe man hid in lorry before falling into road

A SHEPHERD'S Bush man died after being struck by several vehicles on a busy motorway.

Ashley Hayes, 46, was found in the middle of the M1 in Northamptonshire last week after suffering "catastrophic" injuries.

Police believe he may have hidden inside a lorry before falling into the road.

Officers leading the investigation say the death could be suspicious and are appealing for witnesses to come forward.

Mr Hayes is thought to have been at Toddington Services in Bedfordshire at around 1.30am on Tuesday January 10 before making the journey.

Less than an hour later, several drivers phoned police to report a body lying on the motorway.

The northbound carriageway between junctions 16 and 17 was closed until around 3pm while forensic teams moved in.

DS Tony Hopkins, of Northamptonshire Police, did not rule out the possibility that Mr Hayes had hidden inside a lorry.

"We need anyone who was there at the time and may have seen him or witnessed anything suspicious to contact us," he said.



DS Tony Hopkins made a statement at the scene last week

"This may have been an accident or something more serious. We need to determine the circumstances that led to his death.

"There will be lorry drivers and other motorists who may have driven this stretch of road and some of them may have dashcam footage.

"We would urge anyone with information to come forward."

Police said Mr Hayes may have been knocked down by another vehicle in a 'fail-to-stop' collision or that a motorist believed they had hit an animal.

But officers said there was

no bridge or footpath nearby that would provide a route for Mr Hayes to walk on to the motorway.

DS Hopkins said: "The particular stretch of road is unlit and there are roadworks restricting the speed limit.

"People wouldn't expect there to be a pedestrian in the road."

Mr Hayes' family have been informed of the death but have declined to comment at this stage.

Witnesses or anyone with information is asked to call police on 101, or 03000 111222 if calling from outside Northamptonshire.

Exhibition on street project

KENSINGTON and Chelsea Council is inviting residents to its Sloane Street public exhibition to find out more about a project which it claims will reduce the dominance of traffic in the area and create an attractive, high-quality environment.

A spokesman for the authority said: "In partnering with Cadogan as the majority landowner and TfL, the council has an opportunity to improve the public realm not only on borough-controlled roads and pavements but also in areas of the street that are in private ownership."

Detailed information will be available including a model, videos showing how traffic flows

and capacity will be maintained, traffic survey results and other technical information.

Members of the project team will be on hand to discuss the proposed changes and answer any questions.

The exhibition will be held at 129 Sloane Street on the following dates:

- Thursday January 26 from 2pm to 8pm;
- Friday January 27 from 10am to 2pm;
- Saturday January 28 from 10am to 2pm;
- Saturday February 4 from 10am to 2pm.

For more details, visit rbkc.gov.uk/sloanestreet.



Cast members of Portland Place School's version of *Our Country's Good*

Experience a new start

RESIDENTS of Kensington and Chelsea who are looking for a healthy new start are invited to Kensington Central Library today (Tuesday) to browse a wide range of stalls promoting health and wellbeing.

The Munro Co-operative will be on hand to offer a free taster alternative therapy session – and at mid-day the Time to Talk service will be available to help you set your goals for the year.

A spokesman for the council said:

"If you still have energy, why not ride the smoothie bike or at 1pm sing your heart out at the Sing to Live workshop?"

"There is no need to book for these free sessions – just turn up."

Today's event runs from 10am to 6pm.

For more information about health and wellbeing, visit rbkc.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-services/healthy-lifestyles.

Upper school's maiden play is hailed 'fantastic'

PUPILS of Portland Place School have been acclaimed for "a fantastic production" – their first upper-school play, *Our Country's Good*.

The show, held at Teatro Technis, showcased "the very best of pupil talent" at the independent school for those aged eight to 18.

"Parents, staff and pupils were treated to an impressive and entertaining dramatic evening with outstanding performances throughout the cast," said a spokesman for the school in Westminster.

"This is the first play the Upper

School has staged without the involvement of the lower years and it was a huge success."

Our Country's Good is a classic story about a group of Royal Marines and convicts in a penal colony in New South Wales. While the Royal Marines plan on hanging the prisoners, some of the men from the ship try to find an alternative way to punish the convicts. It is agreed that they will stage a play instead.

"Rehearsals were intensive with the pupils dedicating five hours per week since September to perfect

their roles," said the school spokesman. "They have risen to the challenging of balancing rehearsals with their A-level and GCSE studies and taking part in sports. Their impressive effort and stamina were evident throughout the play."

David Chivers, head of drama at Portland Place School and the director of the play, said: "It has been great to see the students develop their stage craft and individual performance skills. Full credit goes to them for balancing rehearsals with their school work and sports."



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA



West London
Clinical Commissioning Group

Your Health Your Care

A public event for residents of Kensington and Chelsea and Queen's Park and Paddington

NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is holding an event in partnership with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

When:
Tuesday, 31 January 2017
from 6pm to 8.30pm

Where:
Small Hall, Kensington Conference and Events Centre, Hornton Street, Kensington, London, W8 7NX

There will be:

- Open-plan stalls
- Health and social care experts giving advice
- Talks from NHS and social care leaders
- A lively Q and A panel

To RSVP visit:

www.improvingcareforlocalresidents.eventbrite.co.uk, email your name to communications@nw.london.nhs.uk, or call 020 3350 4224.



Points of view

Have
your say

Email Jack Dixon
jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

OPINION

THE phrase of the day is “integrated care” as NHS leaders draw up ever-more ambitious plans to restructure our health service and turn down the heat on front-line staff.

But at the coalface, the grind goes on. Bitter January brings a host of new challenges with which many fear our stretched doctors and nurses simply cannot cope.

As we report this week, the number of visits to the A&E department at Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith is once again on the rise. And the level of demand shows no signs of slowing down.

While this newspaper has followed the ongoing struggles at our local hospitals for many months, the extent of the pressures facing staff here in West London was broadcast to millions across the country for the first time last week.

The BBC's ground-breaking fly-on-the-wall documentary series *Hospital*, which aired its first episode on Wednesday, went undercover with the Imperial College NHS Healthcare Trust last autumn.

Its gripping exposé of the traumatic, life-changing decisions that staff are making on a daily basis has shone a national spotlight on the challenges that, sadly, we in London know all too well to be true.

In the first episode, television cameras followed the team at the Intensive Care Unit at St Mary's Hospital as they were forced to postpone an urgent cancer operation to make space for a patient arriving from Norfolk with a ruptured aorta. There were simply not enough beds to accommodate both patients.

“I think we do need more capacity because we're always under pressure,” said one of the hospital's senior staff members in a striking admission. “It does feel to me as though the elastic's a bit nearer to breaking now than it ever was.”

Our treasured healthcare system – which is quite rightly the envy of the world – continues to be the single most emotive political issue on the table.

Here in London we have seen protest after protest, demonstration after demonstration, all in the name of protecting the principles that underpin our proudest national symbol.

We must take time to be thankful for the astonishing work that our dutiful healthcare professionals continue to carry out in what are increasingly becoming impossible circumstances. We owe them our lives.

May's chance to make a difference

THE Prime Minister was right to raise mental health in her speech on the Downing Street steps when she took office in July and we welcome her first significant policy statement on mental health within six months of the start of her government.

Mental health policy and people with mental ill-health have been too often overlooked by successive governments and there is an urgent need for – to use the Prime Minister's own words – a “step change” in mental health.

In her speech on January 9, Prime Minister May demonstrated her personal commitment to “tackle the burning injustice of mental health care”. She has a huge opportunity to make a transformative difference to the mental health, life chances and wellbeing of the two million Londoners who experience some form of mental ill-health every year, and to many millions more across the country.

The Prime Minister is right to focus on children and young people. We have long known that early intervention in mental health is critical to its effective management and treatment, and providing extra training for teachers is a good proposal. Yet with less money coming from local authorities in early intervention, it is important this gap is filled by central government.

The NHS has seen a four-fold increase in referrals for



In a speech last week, Mrs May demonstrated her personal commitment to “tackle the burning injustice of mental health care”

children and young people's services. It is likely that some of this is due to the contraction in local authority-provided services.

More work in schools will also be vital in destigmatising mental illness and encouraging a prevention-led approach; creating the conditions and behaviours to grow more resilient, mental health-friendly environments and communities, and tackle ill-health early, before it becomes entrenched and clinically problematic.

It is important to note, however, that the previous government already set aside specific funding for children and young people's mental health – but systemic challenges in how money in the NHS is allocated means we also need to see an immediate focus on ensuring the already-promised money actually reaches the front line.

The Prime Minister should also be aware that tackling stigma will inevitably lead to more people entering the system seeking help. This vital effort must therefore come hand in hand with a sustained commitment to increase resources. The lack of equality of investment in mental health is itself a

symbol of the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Mental health provision must also better reflect changing times and we welcome the Prime Minister paying attention to digital solutions for enabling quicker consultation and diagnosis.

Important, too, is the attention given by the Prime Minister to mental health in the workplace. The working environment can be a major contributor to mental health crisis – but, equally, can be an essential support to those with mental ill-health. The government should encourage all employers to tackle stigma and create positive working environments and hold them to account if discrimination does occur.

We are delighted that the Prime Minister is recognising the importance of cross-societal, multi-agency approaches to mental health and we fully endorse this. The NHS alone cannot provide what should best be carried out from schools, by employers, at home and in wider society.

The report of the Mental Health Taskforce, and the government's endorsement of it, represents a huge opportunity to improve the mental health of London

and the nation. We are delighted that London's mayor has, like the Prime Minister, made mental health a priority and we continue to support Sadiq Khan in this.

We appreciate the increased transparency NHS England has introduced on spending, access and outcomes, and hope this will lead to significant improvements.

However, what is also needed is a very careful assessment of the two-year NHS contracts about to be applied – they must ensure that the mental health minimum investment standard is adhered to. We will be monitoring this very carefully.

We do not underestimate the financial resources needed to deliver a mentally healthy society but it is not all about money – we all have a responsibility to work together to build better systems and services and to assist people and communities in supporting themselves and to receive high-quality, safe and responsive services when they need them.

The Cavendish Square Group, representing the 10 NHS trusts responsible for mental health services in London

London Weekly News Group 



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your letters and emails

Resolve to back the Sea Cadets

HAVE you made your New Year's resolution yet? If the answer is no, why not consider taking on a challenge in aid of youth charity Sea Cadets?

For the first time, we are thrilled to have places available for a whole host of exciting charity challenges.

The money you raise could really make a difference, as 93p in every £1 that we receive goes directly to our valuable work with young people.

Sea Cadets helps 14,000 young people aged 10 to 18, in 400 communities across the UK, to see the world with confidence, to develop self-belief and skills for life.

Our charity challenges are a team effort between you and us – we offer you support as you prepare and train for your challenge, while you will be helping thousands of young people across the UK through your fundraising.

We have sporting challenges available such as the Prudential RideLondon and the Royal Parks Half Marathon, both designed to push you to the limit.

The Snowdon Triple Challenge awaits those who fancy a tough and exciting multi-activity trial, while aspiring sailors may enjoy a day on the Solent with our Maritime Industry Regatta.

If you would like to make a trip abroad, take a look at the Zambezi River Challenge. It is not one for the faint-hearted.

You will paddle your way along the border with Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, steadily heading



Commuters at Waterloo Station last week as they attempt to make their journey home amid ongoing Tube strike action in a row over job losses and ticket-office closures

for Victoria Falls where you will raft the most tempestuous rapids in the world.

If you are interested in any of these challenges and would like to help raise vital funds for Sea Cadets, please email events@ms-sc.org.

Martin Coles,
Sea Cadets' chief executive

How will council sort this problem?

CONGRATULATIONS to all those recipients in the New Year's Honours list (*London Weekly News*, January 10) for their hard work in the unfashionable area of mental health.

While this is a small reward for their extraordinary work and

dedication for many years, there is much still to be done by others.

As a counsellor and former chairman of Hammersmith and Fulham Mind, I know the hardships that people go through in order to deal with their own personal issues before trying to find a warm and caring service to help them deal with their day-to-day lives.

I'm heartened to read that Theresa May is now recognising the crisis in this area, especially since mental-health issues do affect 20 per cent of the population.

It is unfortunately an ever-increasing problem that desperately needs targeted funding.

Given the government is now making it a priority,

what is Hammersmith and Fulham council going to be doing in order to help provide assistance for those living and working in the borough?

They have been paying lip service to those who are in dire need of assistance for years.

What constructive measures are they going to put in place in order to help address this problem?

Or do we have to wait until the next council elections for them to address the issue in their party manifesto?

People with mental-health issues matter whether they vote or not.

Amanda Lloyd-Harris,
member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Mayor has broken another promise

ORDINARY working Londoners faced more misery as mayor of London Sadiq Khan delivered his third broken promise in less than a week.

After welcoming Londoners back to work last week with a fares increase and abandoning his commitment to have 32,000 police officers on the capital's streets, the Labour mayor broke another flagship promise to deliver "zero days of strikes".

During his campaign last year, the "mayor for all Londoners" pledged to "stop strikes on the Underground", yet he's already broken his promise and ordinary working people are paying the price.

Members of the Labour-supporting RMT and TSSA unions staged a 24-hour strike from 6pm last Sunday (January 8) – bringing chaos to the capital and holding Londoners to ransom.

Figures revealed his failure will drain London's economy of more than £3,000 per second.

The cost of Tube strikes to London's economy is estimated to be £300 million a day, equivalent to 10,172 new police constables being trained and paid for a year.

Mr Khan's "zero strikes" promise is just like all the others – not worth the paper it is written on.

Like all Labour politicians, he's powerless while in the pocket of his union paymasters.

His manifesto already reads like a litany of broken

promises, and it is ordinary working Londoners who are paying the price.

Gareth Bacon AM, Greater London Authority Conservatives' leader

Club so grateful for green light

MORE than a year ago, a planning application for a new stadium at Stamford Bridge with an expanded seating capacity was submitted to our local council, Hammersmith and Fulham.

Over the past 12 months we have consulted widely with neighbouring residents, local businesses, statutory authorities and continued to work closely with the council.

On Wednesday, the council's planning committee considered the application and we are grateful that planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of our historic home.

The committee decision does not mean that work can begin on site.

This is just the latest step, although a significant one, that we have to take before we can commence work, including obtaining various other permissions.

We will continue to inform you of progress throughout this process. Thank you for your continued support.

Chelsea Football Club



Geoff Baker Honours list makes me want to puke

I'M nominating my cat for a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June. I think he's in with a good chance because as a cat he's very good at being cat-like. He has been a cat for all of his life, last week he caught a mouse and yesterday I saw him up a tree. He also drinks milk, sleeps a lot and purrs; as a cat, he's utterly feline and I'm rather looking forward to calling him Sir Cat.

I think he'll walk it all the way to the investiture at Buckingham Palace because that's how you get an official honour these days, isn't it, just for doing your job, for being good at your role? Nothing else is essentially needed, just be good at what you are and you'll get gonged.

It makes me want to puke every time I wade through all 120 pages of the honours list. Time after time they seem to be handed out to those who have just done their job. Albeit they've done their job well – but doing your job successfully is what pay scales were invented for, you shouldn't get honoured for it too.

Don't even start me off on the matter of honours for those who

have simply worked in politics, let alone those who are honoured after making donations to political parties; if I have to discuss the merits of that unfair exchange we'll be up to our necks in my vomit.

But I am curious about this trend to honour our already-successful sportsmen and women. What's that all about? Isn't being rich and famous and gold-medalled or cup-winning enough? Why do they have to get honoured too?

It's not as if some complete unknown, otherwise full-time employed as a bus driver or some such, won an Olympic gold; just stepped off his No 30 to Marble Arch, put on his plimsols and broke the record. These honoured athletes train for their specialist medals and cups, that's all they do.

Oh it's because of national pride, is it? They've been knighted because they've won the hearts of the nation. By doing what, winning? I thought sport was meant to be just about taking part, isn't that "what counts"? Silly me, I am daft.

And in that daftness I would have thought that to be truly deserving of

an honour, ie to be held in great esteem, the qualification should be not to do things for yourself but to do stuff for others.

Now in that regard there were many in the New Year's Honours who were clearly deserving of a gong; I was especially pleased to see OBEs and MBEs awarded to a handful who have worked hard to improve the sad lot of those with mental illness, well done there.

Similarly, those medics and scientists who have made great strides in research that is to the benefit of all mankind – yep, gong them. But as for getting a medal "for services to local government" or "for services to business"... stroll on, didn't you get paid for it?

I know well two people who feature in the recent honours list. I shan't name them, although they are quite famous, but although I see that they were listed as being gonged for services to their respective professions, I happen to know that they have both done a lot of work for charity behind the scenes and have helped raise a great deal of money for very needy people. So well done

them, much deserved. But I also have another friend who has pretty much spent decades of his life wearing himself out through charity work which is extra-curricular to his exhausting job. He's just an ordinary bloke, not famous or rich, but he does an awful lot for others.

He doesn't know this but a couple of years back me and two other friends of his nominated him for an honour. We wrote to the many charities and good causes for which he has raised tens of thousands of pounds and they sent back letters of effusive support of our application to the Honours Committee. Every man Jack of them said absolutely, if anyone deserves an honour for selflessly doing things for others without expecting a word of thanks it's X, give him a gong.

We inundated the Honours Committee with such backing. One honours list was published and he wasn't on it. So we sent more stuff; Press cuttings, laudatory testimonies, piles of evidence, stacks of it. Another honours list was published and again he didn't get a look-in.

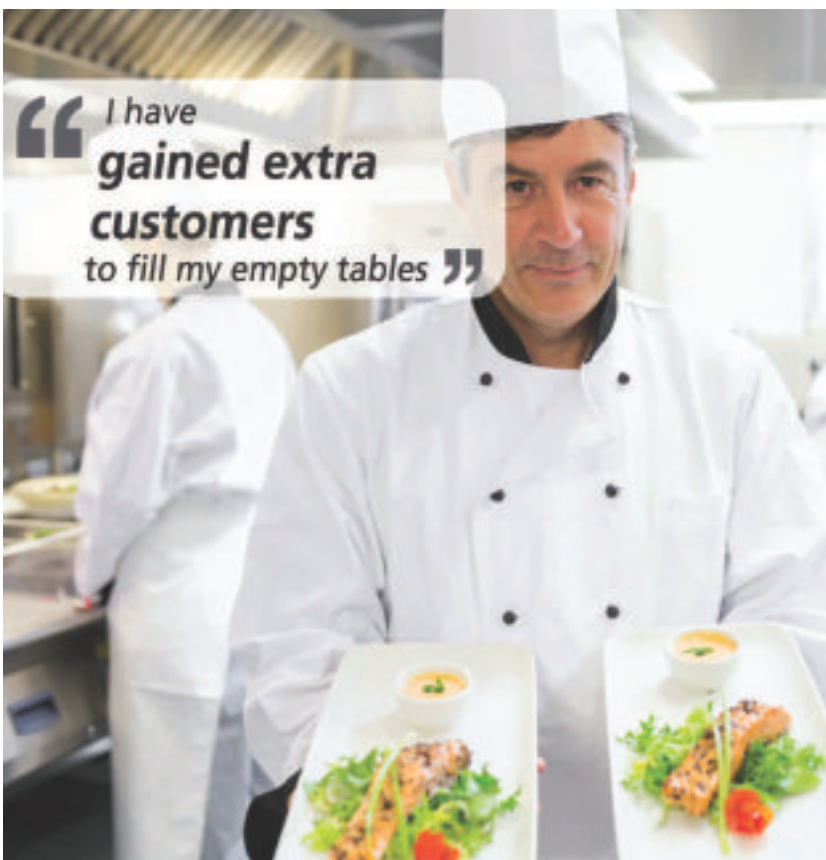
So we approached Somebody Rather Important and said "You know this guy, you know all about the charity work he does, you know that it's crippled his health, can you add your clout to our application?"

Of course, said the Somebody Rather Important, I'd be happy to, and don't worry, with my name behind him he'll get gonged.

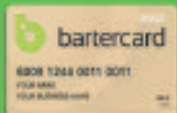
But he didn't. And now, after three refused applications, I'm informed that he never will. And I think I've worked out why – he's the wrong sort of chap; working class, didn't go to the right school, not a member of the club.

It's been said elsewhere and I'm saying it again – in part the honours system is a club, a clique, a means of the already rich or famous looking after their own. Non-entities to the back door, please.

But post-Brexit, post-Trump, isn't there a lesson here which we should force on this self-feathering establishment? Isn't it time that the people's vote should decide on who gets gonged, so that those who are not already rich, famous and fortunate get more of a look-in?



“ I have
**gained extra
customers**
to fill my empty tables ”



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PopUp College boss Jason Elsom is behind the scheme to offer, at Costa shops, tuition for GCSE English and a diploma in health and social care. He says the idea is to “fill the gap” in adult education left by local authorities’ cutbacks



Coffee shop now centre for learning

COFFEE shops have become popular meeting places for on-the-go Londoners – the perfect spot for a working lunch or a business briefing.

But one entrepreneur now hopes to turn Hammersmith's cafes into hubs for learning.

New evening courses will be available at Costa shops from this month, offering tuition for GCSE English and a diploma in health and social care.

The educational initiative is the brainchild of Jason Elsom, a University of Cambridge graduate who is aiming to launch hundreds of evening classes at coffee houses all over the country.

His company – PopUp College – has teamed up with the international coffee chain in an attempt to “fill the gap” in adult education left by local-authority cutbacks.

Starting this month, aspiring students will have the chance to take part in weekly evening classes at the Hammersmith branch.

The English lessons are taking place alongside GCSE science classes in Romford and A-level maths lessons in Whitechapel, while business skills are being taught in Ilford. One branch in Putney is even providing language courses in Italian.

Mr Elsom said the programme is targeting adult students who feel uncom-

fortable about returning to the classroom. “At a time when adult education is under threat, we wanted to give people the chance to come in one night a week and learn a new skill, have some fun and socialise at the same time,” he said.

“The Costa store creates a welcoming environment for adults who want to learn but who are put off by the idea of a traditional college classroom.”

Mr Elsom was inspired to launch the scheme after a career switch of his own. He began his working life in the technology sector before retraining as a teacher and turning his hand to education.

Having risen to a senior leadership role within the field, he now works on a range of educational initiatives with private-sector partners.

Since launching PopUp College in 2015, the business has grown to encompass more than 50 locations and 240 courses.

Costa said it wants to make a positive contribution towards customer health and wellbeing by investing in educational projects.

Sandy Gourlay, the company's charity and community manager, said: “We are delighted to support Jason and PopUp College with this exciting new initiative to create accessible courses to engage adults in education and teach people new skills.”

Fresh appeal for information after stabbing

POLICE have launched a fresh appeal for information after a 14-year-old boy was stabbed in a Hammersmith park.

The teenager was knifed in Ravenscourt Park on Thursday January 5 before jumping a locked gate and staggering to a bus stop in Goldhawk Road.

Officers have arrested a 13-year-old boy in connection with the investigation and he has been released on bail while inquiries continue.

The usually quiet and peaceful park was turned into a crime scene overnight as forensic teams and police dogs moved in to investigate the stabbing.

Ambulance crews treated the boy at the scene before he was taken to hospital in a stable condition.

The incident prompted Hammersmith MP Andy Slaughter to raise concerns about safety. Local councillors also called for witnesses to come forward.

Met detectives have renewed their appeals for help with the case, almost two weeks on from the stabbing.

Anyone who can assist with the investigation is asked to call officers on 101 or contact the Met Police Twitter account @MetCC.

It is understood officers were focusing their investigation on a playground inside the park known to be a meeting place for young people.

Local schools among the best

SCHOOLS in Hammersmith and Fulham have performed above the national average once again, according to official figures.

The number of students achieving the key measure of five GCSEs including a C or above in English and maths reached 69.4 per cent last year.

The figure was almost seven per cent above the national average for state schools – 62.6 per cent.

Provisional statistics for 2016 released by the Department for Education revealed the borough's positive academic performance.

Among the highest-achieving schools were the London Oratory School, Lady Margaret School and Sacred Heart High School.

More than 85 per cent of pupils at each of the three schools achieved the benchmark score last year.

Around 61 per cent of children at the borough's primary schools met expected standards, compared to 53 per cent nationwide.

The London Oratory School again recorded the most impressive results, with St Stephen's, Normand Croft, Melcombe and St Augustine's also performing well.

The figures also revealed that 93 per cent of the borough's school leavers in 2014 remained in education or employment after completing their schooling.

Khan to pump £1.5m more into homes scheme

LONDON mayor Sadiq Khan has set out plans to pump an extra £1.5 million into the development of new homes at Old Oak Common.

The mayor's draft budget for 2017-18 includes a financial boost for the huge regeneration project.

Under the plans, a total of £7.3 million will go to the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation – up from £5.8 million last year – to help it push forward with the project.

The corporation is seeking to create tens of thousands of new homes and jobs on the site, which straddles the northern end of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Outlining his draft budget last week, the mayor said: "I believe Old Oak and Park Royal is one of the capital's most important regeneration projects.

"The previous mayor inflated last year's OPDC budget by allocating a one-off payment of £6 million to the organisation.

"Taking that into account, I am, in fact, proposing to increase the development corporation's budget compared to what the London Assembly agreed last year."



A digital impression of the Old Oak and Park Royal development

The budget sets out plans to hold a further £1 million in reserve, pending a proposal for extra investment in the area.

'Powering through' stress

PEOPLE could be ignoring the warning signs of poor health because of London's "always on" culture, according to experts.

New research found that almost half of Londoners deal with stress by "powering through" while a quarter have worried about an ailment without getting it checked.

The findings were revealed in a report by healthcare provider Bupa Health Clinics.

Bupa's Philip Luce said: "When it comes to our bodies, we ignore signs that something is wrong and regularly push ourselves into something we don't feel like doing."

Drones start surveying

COUNCIL-HOUSING teams have begun using drones to survey homes in Hammersmith and Fulham.

The flying machines are being used to identify repairs and reduce the need for scaffolding.

Specially trained drone 'pilots' are operating the gadgets, which record high-quality images of buildings from a bird's eye angle.



Gateway entrance to White City Place

Royal College of Art set for White City

BY JACK DIXON
jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

HUNDREDS of the world's most promising young artists and designers will make the move to White City this year as one of London's leading universities opens a new campus in Hammersmith and Fulham.

The Royal College of Art has announced plans to launch a complex for architecture, humanities and communication at the revamped BBC Television Centre. It will place one of the world's premier art and design institutions at the heart of White City's new creative quarter following a £4 billion redevelopment.

The 4,000 square metre building is set to bring more than 700 staff and students into the borough when the autumn term begins in September.

Town-hall chiefs welcomed the announcement last week as a major boost for the borough's young people who dream of a career in the arts.

The RCA becomes the latest high-profile institution to make the move to White City after fashion giant Yoox Net-a-Porter confirmed plans for a new tech hub in the area last autumn.

The university's schools of communication and humanities will both make a permanent switch to West London, with new architecture programmes also in the pipeline at White City.

Bosses also said the new campus would retain close links with the RCA's design, fine art and fashion hubs in Kensington and Battersea.

Professor Neville Brody, dean of the School of Communication, said: "This is an unprecedented opportunity to extend and deepen our subject landscape, allowing a more leading-edge approach grounding in experience and expertise,



The new RCA building in White City

with new initiatives underpinned by our reputation for innovation and skill."

The campus will be based in close proximity to Imperial College London's new learning hub, which is set to put White City on the map for technological and scientific innovation.

A burgeoning academic community will move into the area this year ahead of the start of the autumn term.

Cllr Andrew Jones, Hammersmith and Fulham council's cabinet member for economic development and regeneration, said RCA's arrival would cement White City's reputation as a "centre of excellence".

He said: "Having so many key names in the area increases the opportunities for young people in Hammersmith and Fulham who dream of making a career in the creative arts.

"We are determined to be the best place to do business in Europe – and a vibrant arts scene helps us do just that."

The former BBC Television Centre is due to reopen at the end of this year with new offices, flats, restaurants and a hotel. A total of £8 billion is being spent on the 15-year regeneration of White City, providing 20,000 new jobs.



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We now run at least 496 more trains each day than in 2013, meaning a faster and more reliable service for you. Just one of the ways we reinvest all our income to run and improve your services. Search Tube Improvements

MAYOR OF LONDON



TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

'There was nowhere for my son to go to for help'

For more than eight years Doreen High felt unable to talk about her son Ricky's tragic death. While he wrestled with complex mental health problems, she felt lost, alone and powerless to help him. In an exclusive interview with *London Weekly News* reporter Jack Dixon as part of our *Change Is Possible* campaign, Doreen tells her story for the first time



When Doreen High was told her son had been sectioned, it was the best news she could have hoped to receive.

"I thought, thank God for that," she recalls. "I had been worried for his own safety but now I knew he was going to get some treatment."

Doreen had never fully understood what was wrong with Ricky. From an early age he had endured spells of depression and struggled with dyslexia, and during his later teenage years his behaviour had become increasingly erratic.

"He said people were following him and there were cameras in his flat watching him," Doreen explains.

"And he kept on about this conspiracy, that someone was going to come and kill him. He was really frightened, he looked very, very, seriously ill."

Doreen found it harder and harder to reach her son. They would go for a drive together and begin to talk, only for Ricky to become distracted by his paranoia.

At the age of 20, he became so fearful for his own safety that he armed himself with an old dart gun he found in the family home. When his girlfriend found the weapon and called the police, officers decided Ricky needed help.

He was sectioned and spent a month living in a specialist home in Kent for people with mental health difficulties. Ricky was diagnosed as psychotic.

"He wasn't hallucinating, it was just his imagination put things in his head and he was convinced they were actually happening," says Doreen. "It's really hard to cope with someone like that because I could see how ill he looked and how convinced he was that everything in his brain was correct. There was just no talking to him, nowhere for him to go for help."

A roofer and builder who loved his work, Ricky became increasingly frustrated as his mental health problems made it more and more difficult for him to lead a normal life.

"He loved music, dancing," Doreen recalls. "He had quite a lot of friends. But even his friends started to drift away from him because they said 'we don't know how to deal with this, we just don't know what to say to him'. He'd suddenly have one of these episodes and just run off."

While living in his countryside flat, Ricky's psychosis kicked in again. He believed his housemate was a paedophile and that he'd been moved there because he was suspected of the same offence. He believed there were cameras in the flat, watching him 24 hours a day.

When Doreen invited him to come home and stay with her, he threat-

ened her boyfriend with a hammer. He believed he was part of the conspiracy.

"There was nowhere to turn. It was very distressing," she adds. "I'd never known anybody who had suffered with that. I didn't know what it was and it was really hard to cope with."

"If there had been somewhere for Ricky to go I would have taken him and he would have come with me. I'm sure they would have helped him and it definitely would have helped me as well."

At the sixth attempt, Ricky committed suicide. He could no longer live with the constant mental pressure of his psychotic illness. He was 28 years old.

For Doreen, the loss was unbearable – and the after-shock has had a devastating long-term impact on her family. "It nearly broke my relationship up. When Ricky died, my eldest son would not speak to me, he blames me for the suicide. It goes on and on, it really affects the family."

"My mum found it very hard to talk about my son and my sister wouldn't talk to me at all about him."

"I virtually turned into a recluse and an alcoholic, just to cope. I couldn't get him help because there was nowhere for me to take him – and I felt guilty about that."

Lambeth and Southwark Mind is set to launch a dedicated psychosis therapy service this year, providing expert support for people like Ricky.

Doreen hopes her son's story will help others who find themselves in his position to seek support: "If Ricky's story helps just one person to go for help then it will all be worth it."

Share your story

Do you have personal experience of living with mental health problems? Has a friend or family member been affected? Your story could help inspire others to donate towards our campaign.

Help us fundraise

Could you support our appeal by organising a fundraising event or setting yourself a sponsored challenge? Every penny could be crucial in helping us reach our campaign targets.

Donate to our campaign

To make a donation to our appeal, you can visit the dedicated website www.givey.com/changeispossible. Alternatively, you can write to Lambeth and Southwark Mind, 4th floor, 336 Brixton Road, London, SW9 7AA.

● For more information, please contact reporter Jack Dixon on 07973 565078 or email him:

jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk



For more than eight years Doreen High felt unable to talk about the suicide of her son Ricky

OUR MENTAL HEALTH MISSION

It's straightforward enough to treat a physical wound. A broken leg or a time given the proper care and attention.

But the scars of mental illness run much deeper and are often difficult to spot. Many people may not even be aware that they are suffering from a mental health problem – and worse still, because of the terrible stigma attached to it, some will choose not to seek help when they need it most.

On a national and international scale, mental health is a subject that we are only just beginning to tackle. There is a long way to go before we can safely say we are living in a society that truly respects and cares for people with mental health problems.

That's why it's so important that we trigger change on a local level. By building in the right values and practices from the ground up, we can help to change the misconceptions that many people have about mental health and create a more caring community in which everyone can thrive.

With the stresses and strains of modern life, particularly in cities like London, it is more important than ever that we look after ourselves and each other.

Organisations like Lambeth and Southwark Mind are leading the way – but they need our help.

Our appeal is not only providing a platform to bring mental health to the top of the agenda. It is also helping to raise the essential funding that Lambeth and Southwark Mind desperately needs to offer treatments and support services to guide people back onto the path towards good health.

We've already raised more than £5,000 towards the cause, won the support of local MPs and the Mayor of London, and encouraged dozens to come forward and share their personal experiences – many for the first time.

For too long mental health has been overlooked. Now we have a chance to make a difference. Change is possible.

New psychosis therapy project

Hallucinations, illusions and imaginary voices may be the stuff of fantasy for most of us, but for those living with psychotic conditions these symptoms can become a part of everyday life.

In complex cases, standard treatments don't always work and mental health practitioners face a constant challenge to find the right form of therapy for each individual.

Lambeth and Southwark Mind is set to launch a pioneering new service this spring that will offer long-term treatment for Londoners in the grips of a mental health crisis.

The psychosis therapy project aims to promote and develop individualistic support for people with psychotic diagnoses.

It has already proved hugely successful in north London, where Islington Mind has been delivering a similar service for the last four years.

Dorothee Bonnigal-Katz, an experienced psychoanalyst who runs her own practice in Leamington Spa, is leading the initiative.

"We work with people on the basis of their experience, not their symptoms or behaviour," she says. "We focus on



Dorothee Bonnigal-Katz says there is too much emphasis on medication

what they tell us and take it on board critically and non-judgementally."

In a crucial difference to other services, Mind will offer open-ended talking therapies that are carefully designed to avoid the pitfalls of labelling and rejection. Dorothee says there is too strong a focus on medication and short-term targets. Her approach is to be less restrictive.

"People should have access to therapy for long periods of time because, especially with psychosis, things are very slow and you need a permanence or steadiness in the work

that you offer for people to be able to benefit," she adds.

"Time-limited work can be helpful in some ways – but it's just not enough. I really believe in the benefits of talk therapy for people with this profile. I think it will be highly beneficial in south London."

Lambeth and Southwark Mind is set to launch the free service as a pilot programme in partnership with the Mosaic Clubhouse in Brixton in March.

Dorothee Bonnigal-Katz will present the charity's annual lecture on psychosis therapy to mark the start of the project next month. The lecture takes place at 336 Brixton Road, London, SW9 7AA on Saturday February 25, starting at 2pm. Tickets are available online at <http://bit.ly/2ijLXn3>.

The South London Press is giving away free tickets to the first 10 readers to contact reporter Jack Dixon on 07973 565078 or via email at this address:

jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk. Maximum two tickets per person

Happy 90th, 'Mr Rudest'

SOHO legend Norman Balon, long celebrated as "London's rudest landlord", was for once lost for insults when his old regulars sprang a 90th birthday surprise at his return to the Coach and Horses in Greek Street.

Mr Balon, famed for his abuse to customers at the bar that he ran for 63 years before his retirement in 2006, thought he was just popping in for a pint at his old pub on Thursday – but he found the Coach packed with pals going back to the days when his regulars included the *Private Eye* team, artists Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud and Damien Hirst and actors John Hurt and Peter O'Toole.

Typically, at first he gave a grumpy response to the crowd of 120 who had been invited in secret by landlord Alastair Choat.

"When Norman first walked in and saw everybody he turned to his wife Grazia and said 'F-it, someone's having a private party, let's go somewhere else'," said Mr Choat.

"She said 'No, they're all here for you!' – To which Norman characteristically responded 'F-off! They're all f-ing mad!'"

But when the penny dropped the notoriously grumpy Mr Balon thawed. "As soon as Norman realised the good, the bad and the ugly of Soho were there to pay their respects and celebrate with him, he was back in his stride as if he had never left," said Mr Choat.

"But on this occasion Norman was very happy and this was evident in



the smiles and laughter ringing around the pub.

"There were a number of hilarious speeches relaying the times and memories of those who know Norman the best. Michael Magarain, a long-time friend who first visited the pub in 1974 and now a criminal defence QC, delivered the first speech of memories of the pub and personal story of his friendship with Norman.

"The highly amusing stories, littered with profanity, included Michael's observation that Norman was not the rudest landlord in London but indeed London's rudest person, which received huge applause – but he finished with the words 'What many don't realise, Norman, is that you are of bigger stature and even bigger of heart'.

"Struan Rogers, the actor and Norman's great friend and chess partner, really summed the occasion up and left not a dry eye in the house when he said 'These people would not have turned up here today if you were not held in such high regard. And on behalf of everyone here, thank you very,

very, very much not for what you were but for what you are.'"

Following the speeches, including from Mr Balon's daughters Lisa and Natasha, the acclaimed cartoonist Michael Heath presented Mr Balon with the latest cartoon addition to the pub's collection, Norman's 90th birthday card. Michael proclaimed Norman to be his father figure and his very moving speech. Michael showed the love and respect between these two luminaries," said Mr Choat.

The final presentation came from artist and writer Nick Wells, who gave Mr Balon a customised version of the Oscar; a Norman-styled toby jug with the inscription "Norman Balon for exceptional services to Soho". By the end even Norman had a tear in his eye. But that did not put him off his traditional style," said Mr Choat.

"In his acceptance speech he said 'I hated the customers, they were a bloody nuisance, every one of them.

"But I am very touched about all of this. This is a very great day in my life, as you can all realise, and I want to thank my children and my wife, my great friends here and *Private Eye*. It's been a fantastic day, a complete surprise and don't forget to pay your bill before you go."

Mr Choat said: "For me as the current landlord, trying to fill a giant pair of shoes and feeling a little like David Moyes, the most moving moment was seeing the joy in Norman's face."

UNDER THE WESTWAY

Angela McConville, Westway Trust chief executive, looks ahead at another busy year under the Westway.

THE New Year has begun with a flurry of activity under the Westway.

First up, last week saw the opening of the Pop Up Nursery at the Venture Centre. It was launched by the team here at Westway Trust who are also behind the Pop Up Creche which provided nearly 1,500 hours of childcare in its first year and in the process created 16 jobs and provided training for volunteers to help accelerate their careers. The Pop Up Nursery, which is being run in collaboration with the Venture Community Association, and will be open five days a week, is a great example of the terrific things that can be achieved when we bring together the resources and expertise of the community. This week we re-open our Community Grants programme. In the last round we supported a wide variety of local social enterprises, charities and community projects in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea with more than £50,000 of grants awarded. These grants went to 28 organisations that between them will reach 4,500 local people.

The rest of this year will be no less busy as we continue existing work supporting learners, maintaining the estate and working with Notting Hill Carnival, Portobello Live, Portobello Film Festival and Nour, among many other things. We're already working with local people and groups to produce and implement an ambitious environmental programme that will seek to limit the impacts of the pollution coming off the Westway and into North Kensington. We're already working with local groups to identify the areas where we can have the greatest impact and we'll be asking the wider community to get involved soon. We'll also be seeking your input as we continue our community-led work to develop the Maxilla area of the estate. Our first survey last year began to give us an idea of what people would like to see there and this year we will be working collaboratively to develop these ideas further. This follows the

valuable feedback we continue to receive as we progress our plans for the Portobello area of the estate. You can find a summary of what we learned during the exhibition of the plans on our website at westway.org/portobello. This year, as we move past initial planning considerations, we will focus on occupancy, usage and finding the right balance of activities for the spaces.

Away from that scheme we have a number of projects that will see greater animation of Thorpe Close and Acklam Road outside of traditional market days. We plan to install some semi-permanent enterprise pod on Thorpe Close in the summer and we're already in discussions with partners to use them for a community cafe, youth enterprise pilot sites, and flexible spaces for emerging local entrepreneurs.

The Portobello Winter Festival showed that by collaborating with great partners we can use our resources to build events that bring people from near and far to spend money with local businesses as well as creating space for local celebration. To that end, we'll be supporting more events in and around the Westway across 2017, and providing a platform for local creative people, showcasing the diverse talent of North Kensington. Even relatively small grants to support local festivals and celebrations, along with some logistical and promotional support from the trust, can help the organisers make a good event into a great one.

At the other end of the estate, we have been working with the North Kensington Community Stables CIC to agree a plan that should see an expanded community-riding operation reopen this year, with improved facilities being planned for the future. Alongside that, 2017 will see our sports partner Everyone Active working with us to invest almost £4 million in improvements to Westway Sports & Fitness as we continue the journey to get even more people active. If we can double the number of people visiting Westway Sports & Fitness in the coming years, we will have a tremendous impact on the health of the local community.

ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Why should I go to a public event about health and social care?

The NHS and your local council are holding a joint public event for residents of Kensington and Chelsea, and Queen's Park and Paddington. Here's why you should go...



HEALTH and social care in your local area is changing. NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are holding a joint event called *Your Health, Your Care* to tell you about plans to bring health and social care closer together – and give you the opportunity to ask questions about these plans.

The doors will open at 6pm for you to browse open stalls offering health and social care advice, and locally tailored information on how to choose the right NHS service for a particular need.

From 6.30pm, there will be a series of short talks from health and social care staff. These talks will

be followed by a lively questions-and-answers session, where residents, patients and carers can ask questions in a public setting – and really listen to the answers.

Dr Fiona Butler, chairman of NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group said: "We are really looking forward to *Your Health, Your Care* on January 31. It will be a great opportunity for us to hear from patients, carers and the public, and an opportunity for them to get some detail from us about how we will improve services in the CCG area."

NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group has already set out its priorities for joining up

health and social care in the Sustainability and Transformation Plan, which was drawn up between eight clinical commissioning groups and a number of local councils. This shared North West London Sustainability and Transformation Plan has been submitted to NHS England for approval, and it has been published in its current form on the clinical commissioning group website.

The plan is a blueprint for essentially doing five things: driving an overall improvement to the health and wellbeing of our population; making sure the hospital services you use most are safe, sustainable, and smartly run; helping people over 65 stay fit and independent; tackling the roots of mental-health problems in our community by guaranteeing strong preventive care in the early stages of illness; and giving patients with long-term illnesses such as asthma or diabetes, and their carers, reliable health education from our clinical experts to help them live a successful, dynamic life. Attendees at the event will have the chance to ask questions about the reasons for these plans, how the plans will work in practice, and what benefits can be expected as a result.

Cllr Mary Weale, the royal borough's cabinet member for adult social care and public health, said: "This is a chance for users of these services to put questions to those who plan and deliver them."

Osman in line for recognition in Birthday Honours? It's not such a pointless question

WILL the Queen's Birthday Honours in June feature a gong for Richard Osman – for services to Her Majesty's teatime TV entertainment? Odd as it may sound to some, Alexander Armstrong, Osman's co-host of *Pointless*, the popular BBC One general-knowledge quiz show, has revealed that the Queen is a fan.

"A palace insider told us that she watches it," Armstrong told *Radio Times*.

Although Her Majesty's viewing habits are officially undeclared, many claims have been made over the years as to what she likes to goggle. At one point some years ago it was reported that she was a huge fan of *Countdown*.

"The Queen accidentally became a fan of the Channel 4 words and numbers game because it followed the afternoon racing slot. According to her biographer Brian Hoey, Her Majesty was not amused when the time of the programme was brought forward as it then clashed with her walk in the palace grounds with her corgis," the *Daily Express* reported.



Mr Hoey, author of *At Home With The Queen*, has also been credited as the source for claims that Her Majesty was also a keen viewer of *Downton Abbey*. He revealed that

came up in a conversation with a worker at Buckingham Palace.

He told *The Daily Telegraph*: "We were talking about Trooping the Colour and how the Queen always notices if anything is not quite right, such as one young officer she spotted wearing his medals in the wrong order not long ago."

"Apparently she is exactly the same when she is watching the television. She loves watching *Downton Abbey* and pointing out things they have got wrong, partly because she is familiar with Highclere Castle, where it is filmed."

"She used to stay there as a guest of the Carnarvon family."

As further claims over the years have had it that Her Majesty also enjoys *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street*, *Last Of The Summer Wine*, *New Tricks*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Doctor Who*, *Dad's Army*, *The Last Detective*, *The Bill* and, bizarrely, *The X-Factor*, it's a wonder that she has any time to get any banqueting done.

Her Majesty's television viewing must

have been especially busy of late as it has been also claimed that she is a fan of *The Crown*, Netflix's magnificent 10-hour first series of its £100 million biographical drama of the Queen's reign.

If such is the case, Her Majesty may be disappointed to learn that Claire Foy, the actress who last week won a Golden Globe award for her portrayal of the young Queen Elizabeth in the saga, is shortly to be leaving the drama.

Although Ms Foy has been signed to continue playing the Queen in the second series which starts filming soon, she will then be replaced by an older actress as *The Crown* rolls on to dramatise the 1965-1985 years at the palace.

"After two seasons, that's it, I'm gone," said 32-year-old Ms Foy.

Among those currently being tipped to take over the much-sought role are Emily Watson, 49, Rachel Weisz, 46, and Kate Beckinsale, 43.

Geoff Baker

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The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh meet then-cast members Jean Alexander, Bernard Youens and Geoffrey Hughes on the *Corrie* set. Her Majesty is believed to be a big fan of the soap

THE government's surprise decision to back the campaign for greater understanding of mental illness is being seen as a triumph for the Kate Factor, writes Geoff Baker.

It is believed that it was the high-profile campaigning by the young royals of Kensington Palace for an end to the stigmatising of the mentally ill which influenced Prime Minister Theresa May to call for a revolution in mental health care.

The success of the new "let's be open about mental health" drive by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry is thought to have had a key effect on the new Downing Street policy.

The government wants to effect sweeping change in social care, quashing prejudices and ignorance as modern Britain is educated to the fact that there is no shame, nor any failure, in becoming mentally ill.

Last week the Prime Minister made the fight for better understanding official, when she launched what aspires to be the biggest drive in British history to eradicate the stigma of mental illness, following the lead of the Kensington Three and this newspaper's *Change Is Possible* campaign. The issue, said Mrs May, had for too long been dangerously disregarded.

Although charities including Mind, Mencap, Time To Change and Sane have for years campaigned for this better awareness, it is believed that it has been the passionate efforts of three royals that have caused the government to rethink the way society treats those who suffer any of the many illnesses of the head.

The high-profile and much-publicised work of the three young royals and their Heads Together campaign has helped drive the authorities to get a grip at last on overthrowing an almost-medieval attitude to mental health, and to propel the understanding that discrimination against the mentally unhealthy has no more place in modern Britain than bear-baiting or sending little boys up chimneys.

Mrs May acknowledged the influence of the young royals when she announced her mental-health reforms last week.

In her speech to the Charity Commission she said: "For years the only people who have stood up for those with mental ill health have been civil society groups and charities.

"Now I want us to build upon your success and the fantastic work that many including those here today are doing. Organisations such as Mind, who have led the way in helping those experiencing mental-health problems, and the Heads Together campaign – and the fantastic leadership shown by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry – that aims to break the stigma surrounding mental-health problems."

Now, as further endorsement of the work of the Kensington Three in their fight to improve attitudes to mental illness and as a sign of government commitment to the cause, it is hoped that Mrs May could announce that the Treasury will match money raised for the royals' mental-health cause at this year's London Marathon.

Due to the efforts of the Kensington Three, this year's marathon will be staged to raise cash for the Heads Together campaign. As Mrs May has now set out her stall that no illness more debilitates the nation than mental illness, it is hoped that on the eve of the big run on April 23 she will announce further funding

May's new stance on mental health is a triumph for the Kate Factor



It is believed that Prime Minister Theresa May's call for a revolution in mental health care was influenced by the campaigning of Kate and William, together with Prince Harry

for the marathon's cause in the form of grants, tax breaks or VAT relief.

The Prime Minister has been swayed to act on the mental-health crisis by the royals who spelled out their commitment in a joint statement last year.

They said: "Through our work with young people, emergency response, homeless charities and with veterans, we have seen time and time again that unresolved mental-health problems lie at the heart of some of our greatest social challenges.

"Too often, people feel afraid to admit that they are struggling with their mental health. This fear of prejudice and judgement stops people from getting help and can destroy families and end lives. Heads Together wants to help people feel much more comfortable with their everyday mental wellbeing and have the practical tools to support their friends and family.

"The Heads Together campaign will build on the great work being done by our partner charities so that prejudice and fear no longer stand in the way of people getting the help they need.

"Being the 2017 Virgin Money London Marathon Charity of the Year is the perfect springboard for the Heads Together campaign. We cannot wait to see hundreds of runners hitting the streets of London in April to end the stigma and change the conversation on mental health once and for all."

However, although the huge media coverage of so many running for our minds will very much help to put the issue on the public



agenda, it may need more effort than that to effect the change in attitude which the Prime Minister spoke of last week when she said: "For too long mental illness has been something of a hidden injustice in our country, shrouded in a completely unacceptable stigma and dangerously disregarded as a secondary issue to physical health. Left unaddressed, it destroys lives, it separates people from each other and deepens the divisions within our society."

A key effort which is needed for the campaign to have the success which it deserves is for every family to be open and honest about any history of mental illness. As one in four have suffered or will suffer from a broken mind, that means that there are an awful lot of us in the closet and, as was the case with the "glad to be gay" campaign which marvellously changed outdated thinking in the 1970s, mental-health experts believe that a similar openness is required now.

It will be interesting to see whether William, Kate and Harry next lift the lid on incidences of mental ill health in the history of royalty in order to push home the point that it is an illness which affects all, and therefore help lessen the stigma.

As Dr Lucy Worsley, the royal and TV historian, noted some years back when she presented the BBC

documentary *Fit To Rule*: "It is counter-intuitive to suggest it but royal health issues can actually strengthen the monarchy, not least by creating sympathy and affection for an afflicted individual."

In the case of her programme, Dr Worsley was discussing the case of George III, long dismissed as the mad king who lost America.

She wrote: "In recent years, it has become fashionable among historians to put his 'madness' down to the physical, genetic blood disorder called porphyria. Its symptoms include aches and pains, as well as blue urine.

"The theory formed the basis of a long-running play by Alan Bennett, *The Madness Of George III*, which was later adapted for film starring Nigel Hawthorne in the title role.

"However, a new research project based at St George's, University of London, has concluded that George III did actually suffer from mental illness after all.

"Using the evidence of thousands of George III's own handwritten letters, Dr Peter Garrard and Dr Vassiliki Rentoumi have been analysing his use of language. They have discovered that during his episodes of illness, his sentences were much longer than when he was well.

"A sentence containing 400 words and eight verbs was not unusual. George III, when ill, often repeated himself, and at the same time his vocabulary became much more complex, creative and colourful.

"These are features that can be seen today in the writing and speech of patients experiencing the manic phase of psychiatric illnesses such as bipolar disorder.

"Mania, or harmful euphoria, is at one end of a spectrum of mood disorders, with sadness, or depression, at the other. George being in a manic state would also match contemporary descriptions of his ill-

ness by witnesses. They spoke of his 'incessant loquacity' and his habit of talking until the foam ran out of his mouth. Sometimes he suffered from convulsions, and his pages had to sit on him to keep him safe on the floor.

"The researchers have even thrown doubt on one of the key planks in the case for porphyria, the blue urine. George III's medical records show that the king was given medicine based on gentian. This plant, with its deep blue flowers, is still used today as a mild tonic but may turn the urine blue.

"So maybe it wasn't the king's 'madness' that caused his most famous symptom. It could have simply been his medicine."

In her *Fit To Rule* series, Dr Worsley examined our kings and queens as individual members of the human race, rather than just as impregnable icons of splendour and power, and concluded: "They suffered many of exactly the same biological and psychological weaknesses as the rest of us.

"The explanations or diagnoses that we come up with for patients in the past reflect our own current attitudes to sickness and health. One of the reasons that the porphyria argument caught on is because it seemed to remove the supposed stigma of mental-health issues from the Royal Family."

To help correct the belief that a broken mind is more stigmatising or shameful than a broken leg, it is worth considering that George III was not the only royal to have suffered in the same way as many of us.

Prince John, the fifth son and youngest of the six children born to King George V and his wife Queen Mary, was discovered to have epilepsy and was also believed to have some form of intellectual disability and possibly autism. As his condition deteriorated, he was sent to live at Sandringham House and was kept away from the public eye. His illness was only disclosed to the public after his tragically early death, aged 13, in 1909 after a severe seizure.

More recently, a Channel 4 documentary of five years ago revealed the story of Nerissa and Katherine Bowes-Lyon, nieces of the late Queen Mother and cousins of the Queen, who were incarcerated for 40 years in the Royal Earlswood Asylum for Mental Defectives in Surrey and were placed for care there in 1941 as they were born in a time when children with learning difficulties were a family's stigmatising secret.

But as Prince William argued at a Heads Together event just before Christmas, thankfully such secrets have no need to exist any longer.

"The rapid increase in poor mental health is one of the biggest challenges we face as a society and it is a challenge Catherine, Harry and I feel duty bound to tackle.

"All of us have mental health, just as we have physical health, and we will all experience pressures on our mental health at some point in our lives.

"But for too long, held back by stigma, shame and fear, people have found it difficult to open up to others about those times when their mental health needs support.

"When we talk and listen to family, to friends and colleagues, we share the load; we reduce the problem; we realise we are not alone and we break down the barriers that prevent us from getting the help we need.

"It is really that simple: a problem shared is a problem halved."

And now, with the government properly on board, change is not only possible but is going to come.

LWN

News for Westminster, Chelsea, Hammersmith, Shepherd's Bush and Fulham

WATCH OUT

In Westminster, Chelsea, Shepherd's Bush, Hammersmith and Fulham

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This is a monthly column by Peter Faulkner of Who Can You Trust offering advice to the elderly and the vulnerable on how to safeguard themselves against fraudsters and rogue traders and offering advice on safety in the home.

Contact Peter on 07958 475392 or email peter.fau67@gmail.com

Troels is the man to help bring down cyber crooks

TROELS Oerting, former chief security officer for Barclays Bank, is the new man to head the crackdown on cyber criminals.

He has been appointed chairman of the Global Cyber Alliance (GCA), an international, non-profit organisation focused on addressing systemic cyber risks and attacks.

Oerting (pictured right) has vast experience in cyber security. Before his transition to the private sector, he spent more than 35 years in law enforcement with a focus on information security.

He held various senior leadership positions with the Danish police, including Director of Danish NCIS, National Crime Squad, SOCA and Director of operations in the Danish Security Intelligence Service. He also spent a 11 years at Europol as acting head of their Counter Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Centre.

"Over the past year, since GCA's inception in late 2015, tremendous strides have been made in development of projects that will have dramatic impact on the state of cyber security," said Oerting.

"Systemic cyber risk is an issue that every organisation – large or small, public or private – needs to address for themselves, their customers and to improve the digital world we all live in."



Don't be a victim of phone thieves

A MAJOR drive to crack down on mobile phone thefts and pick-pocketing in Westminster ends this month a part of the Metropolitan Police campaign Operation Blizzard.

Officers have been out in force during Christmas and New Year to try and save revellers the inconvenience of having their mobile phone stolen.

As many as 10,000 mobile phones are stolen every month, often by opportunistic thieves who will take any chance to steal a phone, which can be distressing, costly and a huge inconvenience.

The Met is urging the public to take a few simple steps to prevent crime:

- Don't leave your phone unattended on a table or in a bag.
- On a night out, look out for each other's phones.
- If you need to use your phone, be aware of your surroundings. Try going hands free or stand away from the roadside close to a wall so no one can come up behind you.
- Don't text while you're walking, you won't notice potential thieves approaching.
- Make sure security features like keypad locks and remote data wiping are all activated to stop thieves from accessing your phone and personal data.
- Know how to identify your phone if it's stolen
- Find your IMEI number by dialling *#06# from your phone and keep a written note of it.
- Register your phone on www.immobilise.com to help police return recovered stolen property and combat the sale of stolen goods.

Your number's up

A CREDIT card with a constantly changing security code has been launched to try and combat fraud.

The three numbers on the back of the card will be replaced by a digital display randomly generating a new combination every hour.

The digital security company Oberthur Technologies is talking to UK banks about introducing the innovative card and was due to launch in France at the end of 2016..

The security code on the back of most credit and debit cards is required to make payments online.

Fraud in the UK involving cards, remote banking and cheques totalled £755m in 2015, with more than 20,000 victims.

The mini-screen on the new card is powered by a small battery designed to last three years.

The Posh time bomb

By Peter Faulkner

LONDON residents, some living in the most prestigious postcodes in the capital, are sitting on a potential time bomb.

Figures compiled by the Gas Safe Register, reveal that despite continual warnings people are still not getting gas appliances serviced and maintained by registered fitters.

Regents Park, Kensal Green and Chalk Farm combined were the three most serious districts with 303 faulty appliances recorded and of these 182 were unsafe gas fires.

But they were closely shadowed by Shepherd's Bush with 301 unsafe appliances including 154 gas boilers, Kensal Green was next in the list with 225 faulty appliances, 104 of them boilers, while Hammersmith also reg-

istered triple figures with 219 cases and 108 dodgy boilers

In upper class Belgravia and Kensington there were a total of 179 dangerous appliances, 74 boilers in Kensington and 34 in Belgravia while equally posh Chelsea totalled 124 cases and 73 faulty boilers.

Earls Court, commonly known as bedsit city, had just 46 cases but more than half (27) were dangerous boilers.

The figures are disturbing because it highlights the ignorance of residents and because it only covers the homes that Gas Safe were able to survey, it means there are hundred's more potential homes in danger.

A spokesman for the Gas Safe Register said: "All gas appliances in your property need to be safety checked by a Gas Safe registered engi-

neer annually and serviced according to manufacturer's instructions.

"Any appliance left unchecked could leave residents at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. It's a good idea to have your gas pipework inspected at the same time as having a gas safety check, every year.

"People are putting their lives in danger as they are far too trusting of tradesmen, employing workmen based on their appearance and behaviours rather than qualifications and skills.

"The majority of people admitted the most common things they look for are politeness, good eye contact, confidence, good clothing and a nice smile.

"The figures are a concern to gas safety officials as we believe millions of people are letting unscrupulous tradesmen into their homes.

"Depending on the type of work being carried out, they are putting theirs and their families' lives at risk. In fact the research went on to reveal that one in five people – the equivalent of 14 million people – said they had been let down by a tradesman."

If you notice any of the following warning signs, you'll need to get your appliance serviced right away:

- The gas appliance is not working properly
- The appliance is burning with a lazy yellow flame rather than a crisp blue one
- Black marks or stains are evident around the gas appliance
- The pilot light keeps going out
- There is increased condensation in the room.

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Mayor calls on business support to write an industrial plan for capital

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

SADIQ Khan has called on London business leaders to let him be in charge of writing the capital's new industrial strategy.

The Mayor of London, whose previous business experience before entering politics was as a human rights lawyer and chairman of the National Council for Civil Liberties, has outlined his plans for a strategy with the aim of maximising growth and protecting the capital's economy post-Brexit.

Speaking at the London Government Dinner at Mansion House, Sadiq Khan asked the capital's political and business leaders to work with him to develop the new industrial plan which will be designed to improve the city's competitiveness.

He also called on the Government to give London more control over the economic levers required to secure future growth and warned that the Government was increasingly heading for a "muddled Brexit", saying "the only thing that would be as damaging as a hard Brexit is a muddled Brexit".

The Mayor urged business leaders to continue campaigning to put access to the single market and access to skilled workers at the heart of the Government's EU negotiating position and he announced that London will write its own industrial strategy, to feed into the Government's UK-wide industrial strategy white paper, which is expected to be published later this year.

He warned, "any industrial strategy that doesn't work for London will by definition not work for Britain".

On a new industrial strategy for London, Sadiq Khan said: "We can't just stand idly by when there are things that we can be doing right now to reassure investors and help to stimulate economic growth."

"A key part of making London more competitive will be ensuring our city has the power and levers it needs to stimulate our economy. More control for London was important before the referendum, but in the light of Brexit and the economic uncertainty we now face - it's become absolutely crucial."

"So I want to work with every London council and business to ensure we have the tools we need to implement a new industrial strategy for the capital. Because we need more control of the right levers to improve competitiveness, stimulate growth and invest in our long-term future."

"And the bottom line is this - if we want an industrial strategy that works for London and therefore for Britain - we must have more control."



Mayor Sadiq Khan says a plan must be put in place to protect the capital's economy post Brexit

On Brexit, Sadiq Khan said: "It's deeply concerning that we still appear to have muddled thinking at the heart of government so soon before the negotiations are set to start."

"For months now, I've been arguing against a hard Brexit. But the only thing that would be as damaging as a hard Brexit is a muddled Brexit. And - unfortunately - it looks like that is where we are heading without urgent action."

"So I urge you to join me in continuing to put pressure on ministers to fight for the right deal for the whole country. This means fighting to retain privileged access to the single market - the foundation of British jobs, wealth and prosperity - and fighting to retain our ability to employ the best and the brightest talent from Europe and around the world."

"And it means fighting to avoid a reckless hard-headed, hard Brexit approach without any transitional plans in place. It's not too late for the Government to take note and set a new tone."

John Dickie, Director of Strategy and Policy at business group London First, welcomed the Mayor's lead on a new business plan.

"If we make the right decisions now, staying open to skilled and talented people and investing in the homes, transport and digital infrastructure we need, London will continue to grow," he said.

"With the government, the Mayor and business working together, we can create a more productive London - increasing growth by just

one per cent generates an extra £150 billion by 2036 - meaning more jobs, greater prosperity and stronger public services for the UK as a whole."

The City of London Corporation's Policy Chairman Mark Boleat added: "With the Brexit negotiations approaching, the world's attention is focussing on London. For the 450,000 employees and nearly 18,000 firms based in the City alone, as well as the 750,000 financial and professional service employees in London, there's a lot at stake."

"Other major European cities are vying to lure businesses and talent away from our city, and are doing so with a well-structured approach. What we must realise is that the UK's financial ser-

vices sector is deeply entrenched within Europe. London is a financial centre for the whole of Europe and institutions based in the City have entrenched links with corporates in the EU27."

"In order to leave the European Union with the least amount of disruption to financial services businesses and more importantly their customers, it is vital that there should be a transition period."

"Devolution will also play an important role in supporting the wider economy as Britain faces its most significant challenge in recent years and so we support the London Mayor's strategy for power to be devolved from central Government to London."

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North Kensington Library	108 Ladbroke Grove	Kensington	W11 1PZ
Brompton Library	210 Old Brompton Road	London	SW5 0BS
The Tabernacle, Notting Hill	35 Powis Square	Notting Hill	W11 2AY
Chelsea Library	Chelsea Old Town Hall	Chelsea	SW3 5EZ
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Shepherd's Bush CHRONICLE

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IT'S enough to make any Scotsman turn to drink - London's booze experts are predicting that a new trend in the capital's bars and pubs this year will be demand for French whiskey.

And to further send Highlanders to reach for the bottle, the alcohol authorities say trendy drinkers will also be ordering whiskies made by the Swiss, previously famed for their chocolate and clocks.

In its assessment of fashionable tipples for 2017, DrinkUp London, the body which monitors the city's drinking habits, says hipsters will be ordering whiskies distilled in Brittany, the Champagne region and Lorraine.

Although it may be news to hardened Scotch drinkers, the French have been making whiskey since 1987 and there are now more than 40 distilleries in France.

According to a study last year, the French are the largest consumers of Scotch. And now they are set to follow the Japanese and send their own labels to London - along with the Aussies. "Away from Japanese whisky, 2017 will bring



French is the new Scotch!

an increased awareness of malts from Tasmania, Australia's southern-most state, France, Wales, New Zealand, Switzerland, Taiwan and even India," reports DrinkUp London in its forecast.

"With such a range of climates attempting to mimic the great whiskies of America and Scotland we can look forward to some intriguing world whiskies."

But all is not doomed for a dram of the hard stuff as the experts say the imports are unlikely to challenge the great malts of Scotland in sales.

"Scotch and bourbon are hardly going to be knocked

off their perch as the two biggest whisky categories in the world. For a start they're simply too tasty, with an endless array of styles and flavours, to bow down to new world spirits," says the booze body.

"Across the world, however, smaller markets are fast proving themselves worthy of a spot on the back bar."

DrinkUp London is also predicting a boom in Londoners drinking French regional liqueurs, vermouths and aperitifs like the recently-launched 30&40, an aperitif from Normandy that mixes calvados, apple juice and rum.

Take That star's 'incredible' journey with new musical

Nicky Sweetland of LWN meets Gary Barlow and Tim Firth to talk about their show *The Girls*



WITH an abundance of exciting new shows set to hit the West End over the next few months, there's one in particular which has got the critics writhing with anticipation. And after watching a rehearsal, I can say that Gary Barlow and Tim Firth's *The Girls* promises to be a musical not to be missed.

Based on the beloved real-life story of the Calendar Girls, which saw a group of Yorkshire women hit the headlines when they posed for a Women's Institute nude charity calendar, the new musical will open in the West End next month and feature songs by Take That star Gary, who spoke with fervor about the task of setting the tale to music.

Gary said: "This is an unbelievable story and the best thing of all is that it's a true story. The real people are here to tell the story. The Calendar Girls are with us every step of the way with this musical – so as a writer, to have that put in front of you and to see the opportunity for music has been incredible."



Tim Firth, back, Gary Barlow and the cast of *The Girls* pose for award-winning photographer Richard Austin

NICOLAS PIERRE

Suite 726, 28 Old Brompton Road,
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The real-life story has become something of British legend and was made into a blockbuster movie in 2003 starring Helen Mirren and Julie Walters. It was later adapted as a stage play, which was performed both in the West End and by amateur organisations across the country.

Writer Tim had always intended to turn the story into a musical. And after taking his childhood friend Gary to see a production of the play in Milton Keynes, the pair embarked on the project.

Tim said: "The truth is that lots of people thought when I first wrote it as a play and a film that it was a musical. I used to see it printed in the paper as the new musical *Calendar Girls* and after a while I started to think 'Well, maybe there is a musical here'."

As the writing process progressed, the duo decided to give more focus to the families and community involved in the tale.

Tim said: "The idea grew of creating a village-green musical for the world, a musical that radiates out from this village green and that tells the story of this extraordinary feat but also of the husbands and the kids. It allows you to spend more time with the village and enjoy that comedy – and that's when we set sail."

Gary said: "I had to feel like I could bring something to it and immediately, while we were watching the play, I could hear the music, I could hear what it could sound like and I could hear how it could help the story and what it could bring to the whole process, so for me it was incredibly exciting. It's been a bit of a journey."

The Girls has already wowed audiences with performances in both Leeds and Manchester and will open at the Phoenix Theatre on Charing Cross Road on February 21. As well as boasting music by British favourite Gary, the production features choreography by Lizzi Gee and has an all-star cast, including Michele Dotrice, Claire Moore and Joanna Riding, to play the unadorned Yorkshire lovelies.

To date, the Calendar Girls have raised almost £5 million for the Bloodwise charity,

with much of the money going to research cures and treatments. Since the Calendar Girls began their fundraising, the number of children who now survive following a diagnosis with leukemia has increased by 80 per cent.

The musical will continue to raise money for the cause, with a percentage of the profits going straight to the charity. As a show of goodwill to West End audiences, Gary and Tim have also decided to offer tickets with no booking fees or premium rates.

Tim said: "Doing a musical and seeing an audience react to it the way they did in Leeds and Manchester is just thrilling anyway – but it's also incredible to know that from every performance, we are contributing to this research. The truth is that it's an honest musical, it's an English musical and I hope that it's a musical that will make you laugh so much that you'll forget that you've cried."

Gary is very much the man of the moment as far as musical theatre is concerned, with another show set to hit the stage later this year, a production which will feature the music of Take That and be performed by a brand new boyband cast from his BBC One Saturday-night television talent show *Let It Shine*.

Despite some fairly harsh criticism about the cheesy format, the television series – which boasts an enviable group of presenters and judges including Graham Norton, Mel Giedroyc and Gary's band-mates Howard Donald and Mark Owen – *Let It Shine* is so far narrowly winning the ratings war over ITV's *The Voice UK*.

Gary is delighted with the results and said: "I'm very pleased. Obviously the shows that you're watching at the moment... we shot most of them in September last year so I've seen them all and I'm very, very happy."

"For me the most important thing of all is this amazing talent, which I know we have. You're yet to see a lot of it but it's going to be very exciting."

The Girls will begin previews from January 28 at the Phoenix Theatre, with a glamorous opening night on February 21.

Wine&dine

Amazing lunchtime experience at American-style hidden gem



RIGHT in the heart of the city I stumbled across a real hidden gem. The American-style Jackson and Rye restaurant opened a new foodie haven on Old Jewry in Bank just before Christmas – and I can safely say that when I visited on a cold December afternoon, it proved one of the best lunchtime experiences I've ever had, writes Nicky Sweetland.

The opulent Art Deco interior coupled with some subtle lighting helps to create a luxurious ambiance. But somehow an affable and relaxed air is also maintained, which results in the perfect atmosphere for anyone who fancies a break from the hustle and bustle of the world outside.

I consulted the waiting staff to get their opinions before I ordered and I started with a beetroot and curd salad (goat cheese, balsamic vinegar, walnuts, £5.50), which was a fabulously tangy mix of flavours, while fresh and light, so also perfect as a light bite.

I then feasted on beef short rib, prepared in the smoker on site and served with fresh coleslaw, gherkins and a tankard filled with thick cut chips (£18.50).

The tender flesh fell off the bone and the wondrous smoky aftertaste lingered long after my final mouthful.

The rich and succulent main meal was helped along with a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon before I ventured on to dessert.

Again on the advice of my waiter, I sampled

an exquisite melting chocolate sundae (£6.95). Hot butterscotch sauce is used to melt the chocolate bauble before your eyes, leaving a rich brownie topped with sumptuous vanilla ice cream; a warming and truly delectable sweet treat.

The buoyant bistro is also busy at breakfast time and is a great place to go for an after-work dinner.

With its location in the middle of the business quarter and the abundance of dishes to choose from, for all sizes of appetite, you really can't go wrong at Jackson and Rye.

The company also has restaurants in Soho, Chiswick, Richmond and Kingston.

You can get more details by visiting website jacksonrye.com.

MARK HIX MBE'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Crab and corn fritters with spiced crab mayonnaise

Serves 6-8 as snacks



THESE make great little snacks to serve with drinks or as a starter. You could get away with buying dressed crab for this, so you have both brown and white meat.

For the spiced crab mayonnaise

60-70g brown crab meat
3tbsp good quality mayonnaise
1 red chilli, finely chopped

For the fritters

150g cooked sweetcorn kernels, chopped
3tbsp chopped chives
120g Doves Farm gluten-free self-raising flour, or equivalent
About 120-150ml chilled sparkling water
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
100-120g fresh white crab meat
Vegetable or corn oil for deep frying

First make the mayonnaise. As it's such a small quantity, a good liquidiser should do the trick.

Blend the brown crab, mayonnaise and chilli until smooth, then transfer to a small dish.

Mix the sweetcorn, chives and flour together, then add enough sparkling water to make a thick batter.

Season, fold in the white crab meat, and leave to rest for 10-15 minutes.

Heat about 8cm of oil to 160-180C in a large thick-bottomed saucepan or electric deep-fat fryer.

Drop a teaspoon of the mixture into the hot fat and cook for a minute or so until golden, turning with a slotted spoon as it's cooking, and drain on some kitchen paper. Repeat with the rest of the batter, checking the seasoning and texture as you go; if the mixture seems a little stodgy, then you can just dilute with some more sparkling water.

If you want to make them in advance, cook the fritters in a few batches without colouring them completely; then just return them to the hot fat when required. Serve with the crab mayonnaise.



Red hot chilli peppers can help you live longer, claims new research from USA

CURRY and other spicy food containing red hot chilli peppers help people to live longer, according to new research.

Spicy dishes could become part of future healthy eating advice after the study revealed those who eat chilli peppers have a death rate 13 per cent lower than those who do not.

Health benefits could be down to the chilli pepper's principal component, capsaicin, which is

believed to help prevent obesity and modulate coronary blood flow, the study says.

Peppers and spices have been thought to help treat diseases for centuries – but this is only the second study to examine the association between chilli pepper consumption and mortality.

Medical student Mustafa Chopan and Professor of Medicine Benjamin Littenberg used data collected from more than 16,000 Ameri-

cans who were followed for up to 23 years.

The University of Vermont duo examined the baseline characteristics of participants according to hot red chilli pepper consumption.

They found that consumers of red hot chilli peppers tended to be younger, male, white, Mexican-American, married, smokers, alcohol drinkers, with a lower income and less education than participants who did not

consume red chilli peppers.

They examined data from a median follow-up of 18.9 years and observed the number of deaths before analysing specific causes of death.

Chopan and Littenberg say: "Although the mechanism by which peppers could delay mortality is far from certain, transient receptor potential channels, which are primary receptors for pungent agents such as capsaicin (the principal com-

ponent in chilli peppers), may in part be responsible for the observed relationship."

Possible explanations the authors give for red chilli peppers' health benefits include that capsaicin is believed to aid cellular and molecular mechanisms that prevent obesity and modulate coronary blood flow – and has antimicrobial properties that "may indirectly affect the host by altering the gut microbiota".

Capital nights

gigguide

Compiled by Jack Dixon



Amber Arcades

Oslo, Hackney
Wednesday January 18
Dutch singer-songwriter Annelotte De Graaf, who released her debut album *Fading Lines* in June last year. Music is a far cry from her previous job working in the war-crimes department at the United Nations. She landed a record deal after catching the eye of Heavenly Recordings. Ethereal vocals hang delicately over snappy drums and woozy synths on the catchy single *Turning Light*.



Mona

Lexington, Islington
Thursday January 19
US rock band who disappeared from the airwaves after being tipped for big things back in 2011. The five-piece, fronted by Nick Brown, released single *In The Middle* last year – their first new material since 2013's flop *Torches & Pitchforks* album, the follow-up to their self-titled debut. For fans of Bruce Springsteen and stadium rockers The Gaslight Anthem.



King Creosote

Barbican, City of London
Sunday January 22
Scottish balladeer Kenny Anderson, who has released more than 40 albums during a prolific music career, came to prominence when his collaborative album with electro pioneer Jon Hopkins was nominated for the Mercury Prize in 2011. Returned with the haunting acoustic LP *Astronaut Meets Appleman* last year.

IT is one of music history's most famous and influential albums, selling more than 25 million copies and inspiring generations of artists. But now *The Joshua Tree* – U2's seminal 1987 record – will receive top billing as the band embark on a unique world tour performing the album from start to finish, in its entirety, for the first time.

March will mark 30 years since the iconic record's release, spearheading the Irish group's unparalleled rise to super-stardom.

Remarked upon by critics for its heavy political themes, the album featured many of the band's classic songs – from the heartbreaking *With Or Without You* to the soul-searching *I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For* and the epic *Where The Streets Have No Name*.

London's Twickenham Stadium will host the only British date on the tour, which also tracks the band around North America and many of Europe's major cities.

The anniversary shows, which sparked a frenzy of excitement among fans around the world when they were announced last week, were inspired by the climactic political year that was 2016.

According to U2's iconic lead guitarist The Edge, it was the perfect time to look back on an album that examined the changing face of America in the mid-1980s.

"It seems like we have come full circle from when *The Joshua Tree* songs were originally written, with global upheaval, extreme right-wing politics and some fundamen-



Previewing
Irish legends
U2
at Twickenham
Stadium, London

U2 will perform their classic 1987 album *The Joshua Tree* in its entirety

tal human rights at risk," he said.

"To celebrate the album – as these songs seem so relevant and prescient of these times too – we decided to do these shows. It feels right for now. We're looking forward to it."

The Joshua Tree went to number one in Ireland and around the world, selling in excess of 25 million copies and catapulting Bono, The Edge, Adam Clayton and Larry Mullen Jr from music heroes to international superstars.

Time magazine put U2 on its cover in April 1987, proclaiming



them "rock's hottest ticket" in a defining year for the band that saw their arena dates roll into stadium shows to accommodate escalating demand.

The 12 months that followed saw them create now-iconic moments –

the traffic-stopping, Grammy Award-winning music video on the roof of a Los Angeles liquor store, as well as a triumphant return home with the original *Joshua Tree Tour* for four unforgettable shows in Belfast, Dublin and Cork in the summer of 1987.

Twickenham will be the first European stop on the tour, which also includes the band's first US festival headline appearance, at Bonaaroo Music & Arts Festival.

The show in July, with support from former Oasis architect Noel Gallagher and his band the High Flying Birds, was poised to spark a deluge of booking requests as tickets went on sale yesterday.

It is likely to be the single biggest music event to take place in London this year, with hundreds of thousands of UK fans expected to jam the phones and lock down websites in the hunt for a ticket.

And if the comments of U2 frontman Bono are anything to go by, it promises to be a truly memorable occasion.

Recalling the making of the album, the singer described the record's 11 tracks as "an opera".

"Recently I listened back to *The Joshua Tree* for the first time in nearly 30 years," he said.

"(There was) a lot of emotions which feel strangely current – love, loss, broken dreams, seeking oblivion, polarisation, all the greats. I've sung some of these songs a lot but never all of them.

"I'm up for it. If our audience is as excited as we are it's gonna be a great night – especially when we play at home at Croke Park (Dublin), it's where the album was born 30 years ago."

U2 will perform The Joshua Tree in full at London's Twickenham Stadium on July 8. Tickets are now

Moffatt's backstage role

SCARLETT Moffatt, *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!* winner and *Gogglebox* star, will be joining the National Television Awards family as the eyes and ears of all its backstage news when it broadcasts live to the nation on ITV on January 25.

Nominated herself for *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!*, Moffatt, pictured, will assist host Dermot O'Leary in presenting the show as well as taking over all National Television Awards social-media channels on January 25, when the show comes live from The O2 in East London.

She says: "I've never been to an awards ceremony before. I

can't believe the first one I'm attending is as part of the actual NTA team working alongside Dermot O'Leary, the master of live TV.

"To top it off my dad gets to be my plus one and walk me down my first ever red carpet. What more can a girl ask for?"

A spokesman for ITV said: "During the show, Scarlett will provide TV lovers with exclusive content from backstage, tracking down the stars and sharing all the behind-the-scenes buzz with viewers at home and in the arena."

To book tickets to attend the awards, see nationaltvawards.com/tickets.



Capital nights

THE guy on before me was an "alternative" ventriloquist" who drank beer while working the puppet's mouth – he got booze everywhere. So says comedian Omid Djalili, recalling his disastrous first foray into stand-up 20 years ago.

"The compere said 'Please would you welcome Omar Darjeeling'. I pranced on and slipped in all the spillage."

As debut shows go, the Iranian comic's bow was up there with the biggest flops of all.

After struggling with the microphone and slicing open his face, he fell head-first off the front of the stage before ripping a huge hole in his trousers as he clambered, walrus-like, back up.

It was not quite the classy introduction he perhaps envisaged – yet, you would imagine, a pretty hilarious routine nonetheless.

Funnily enough, it's exactly this kind of high-energy buffoonery that Djalili continues to profit from today.

He still plays the 'cheeky chappy' role – more than 20 years later – and delights in larks of a childlike nature, probing at touchy topics like a naughty schoolboy.

Despite the occasional flirtation with more controversial subject matter and 'the big issues', Djalili is, by his own admission, simply "too nice" for spiteful comedy.

Instead, the bits in his latest show – *Schmuck For A Night*, which comes to the Shepherd's Bush Empire next week – are infused with a boyish charm and mischievous innocence.

"As comedians we use humour as a kind of defence mechanism and I'm just trying to make sense of all the things going on around us," he said in an ITV interview ahead of the tour, which is named after a line in the Martin Scorsese film *King Of Comedy*.

Chelsea-born Djalili made his breakthrough in the early 2000s after catching the eye with subject matter inspired by

the duality of his part-Iranian/part-West London elite cultural background.

His memorable early shows began with a tirade of material delivered in an aggressive Middle Eastern accent – only for Djalili to abandon the pretence 10 minutes in, scratch his head in resignation and mutter in eloquent middle-English: "Oh I'm sorry, I just can't keep this up any more."

The 51-year-old has made much of his Iranian roots during his career, starring in the 2010 film *The Infidel*, written by David Baddiel, as lax Muslim father Mahmud Nasir who struggles to come to terms with the surprise discovery of his own Jewish heritage.

Proving himself an equally adept comedy actor, Djalili now possesses a packed CV brimming with namechecks and gold-star references.

His movie credits include bit-part roles in *The Mummy*, *Notting Hill* and *The World Is Not Enough*, as well as *Sex and the City 2* and an award-winning turn in *Casanova* plus a run as Fagin in the West End production of *Oliver!*

On television, he worked with the likes of Lenny Henry, Rob Brydon and Whoopi Goldberg before landing his own BBC sketch series – *The Omid Djalili Show* – in 2007.

A chat show couch-grazer ever since, Djalili has fostered his happy-go-lucky persona with appearances on reality shows *Splash!* and *The Great Sport Relief Bake Off*. But he returned last year with one of his most thoughtful performances to date – as Jo Brand's bungling husband Dave in the under-the-radar BBC sitcom *Going Forward*.

Returning home to West London next week in the middle of a 100-plus-date UK tour with *Schmuck For A Night*, Djalili is sure to offer up a laugh-a-minute routine for comedy fans both old and new.

Omid Djalili performs Schmuck For A Night at the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire on Saturday January 21.

Jack Dixon
previews

OMID DJALILI
at Shepherd's
Bush Empire



Love her or loathe her, Mrs Brown's all set to fill Parky's shoes

WHAT could possibly go wrong – apart from half of the nation switching off?

The Marmite of British comedy, the much-loved and equally much-detested Agnes Brown, is to step into the shoes that the mighty Michael Parkinson once filled with a new Saturday-night BBC show in which she chats to celebrities.

In a move that is expected to spectacularly infuriate its many critics – one of whom dubbed Mrs Brown's Boys "lazy, end-of-pier trash rooted in the 1970s" – the BBC is fizzing with self-congratulation at having thought up the ratings-boosting wheeze *All Round To Mrs Brown's*.

"Now BBC Entertainment and BBC One have commissioned a new Saturday-night series with Agnes Brown and all the Mrs

Brown's Boys favourites," frothed a BBC spokesman.

"Agnes is about to open the door of her very familiar family home, as mammy makes mischief with celebrity guests, surprise audience shenanigans and outrageous stunts, all in front of a live studio audience.

"What could possibly go wrong?"

Mrs Brown's Boys creator, writer and star Brendan O'Carroll says: "The entire cast is excited by this.

"I think Agnes may be worried that she'll need a bigger kettle to make tea for everyone that's coming round."

Charlotte Moore, director of BBC content, sounds delighted at plans for the offshoot of the show



once dubbed the worst comedy ever made and which will doubtless bring accusations that the corporation is now dumbing down to the Earth's core.

She said: "Bringing one of our biggest comedy stars Mrs Brown

to Saturday nights with a new entertainment show is going to be full of fun and mischief and totally unpredictable. I can't wait."

Her colleague Kate Phillips, controller entertainment commissioning, said: "We all agree it's high time some of our bravest celebrities experienced a slice of the world according to Agnes and I can't think of a finer or funnier format to do this in."

Well, perhaps not "all" agree. It is possibly doubtful that television critics like Grace Dent of *The Independent* will be cock-a-hoop.

She once memorably reviewed the show with the words: "Once seen, it is rarely forgotten. To love Mrs Brown, one must be thrilled by a man in a hairnet and

dinner-lady tabard saying the F-word roughly once every 10 minutes, egged on by a loyal studio audience so whipped to hysteria by him that one can hear pants being soiled and spleens exploding with mirth."

But Alan Tyler, the BBC commissioning editor for "entertainment", is anticipating popping his spleen with hilarity.

He said: "Brendan is a truly special talent and in Mrs Brown he has created someone who is loved by our audience.

"We are thrilled that Agnes is throwing her doors open and cannot wait to see what Brendan, Jenny (Jennifer Gibney) and the brilliant cast have in store for those who step inside."

The series will transmit later this year. BBC licence fees are not refundable.

Talk of the town

Mixed performances in a fabulous venue

Ginglik Laugh
Comedy Club
The Roof Gardens

GINGLIK Laugh Comedy Club ran within a converted public toilet in Shepherd's Bush for more than 10 years but has now found a new home at Sir Richard Branson's prestigious venue The Roof Gardens in Kensington, *writes Nicky Sweetland*.

For their inaugural evening of mirth they invited audiences to chortle along to some rising stars of the stand-up comedy circuit within the opulent and luxuriously leafy surroundings.

Some 100ft above Kensington High Street and within The Tudor Marquee, the gathered throng were treated to a range of stand-up styles, with proceedings conducted by MC James Gill.

Humour is an interesting commodity – and although I could understand what Gill was attempting to do, warming up the obviously stiff and affluent audience on a cold January evening was no easy task. Some of his interactions are just a bit too patronising, with the continuous slow clapping required from all in attendance quickly losing its appeal.

The pace lifted when Rhys James took to the stage. The young comic, who has recently broken into the TV circuit with appearances on panel shows including *Mock The Week* and *Virtually Famous*, regaled with some hilarious confessions about his pranking as well as general observations on the life of a struggling comedian in his mid-20s.

After a short break, during which guests were invited to dine on an exorbi-

tantly priced gourmet buffet barbeque, and another round of slow clapping initiated by Gill, we were given a lesson in nerd by Chris Stokes.

Stokes' style relies on long, cleverly angled anecdotes. But with an audience who were struggling to keep warm and who were chowing down on some overpriced burgers, he didn't quite get the pitch right and lost the room by the end of his set.

The club has a strict curfew of 10pm – so when the headline act eventually made it to the stage, they had little more than 20 minutes in which to impress. Impress they did, however, as the pair who call themselves Abandoman expertly worked the room and became thoroughly engaged with their improvised hip-hop, lifting the mood and creating a frenzied excitement when asking for suggestions and volunteers.

Their clever lyrics, solid beats and rousing riffs had many laughing loudly, although the sound was a real issue – microphone too loud and music too quiet – and the set felt very rushed.

The venue is remarkable but if you are going before the spring, you will need to wrap up because despite the heating the marquee remains cold. I also suggest you eat before you go because with a burger and chips costing £15, only the wealthy are able to feast on the freshly prepared barbecue without worrying about their bank balance. You get a free cocktail if you are one of the first 50 guests and free entry to the glorious private members' club until 2am.

RECORD-BREAKING, six-time Tony Award winner Audra McDonald is to return to London's West End in April for four concerts at Leicester Square Theatre. The Broadway legend will be joined on stage this time by host and pianist Seth Rudetsky, who last month starred in the five-star London premiere of his Broadway musical *Disaster!*

The performances will also include a special guest appearance by McDonald's husband Will Swenson – the Tony-nominated star of *Hair* and *Priscilla, Queen Of The Desert* – and are produced by Mark Cortale.

The format of the evening will be a seamless mix of intimate behind-the-scenes stories from one of Broadway's biggest stars – prompted by Rudetsky's probing, funny, revealing questions – and McDonald singing some of the biggest hits from her musical-theatre repertoire.

This is a spontaneous evening of hilarity and show-stopping songs not to be missed.

McDonald's last series of Leicester Square Theatre concerts were recently named one of 2016's best gigs of the year by reviewer Clive Davis of *The Times*.

And they were among LiveTheatreUK's top 10 West End musicals of the year.

"Audra MacDonald's Leicester Square Theatre concert was not really a musical but it certainly counted as one of the greatest nights of musical theatre in the year."

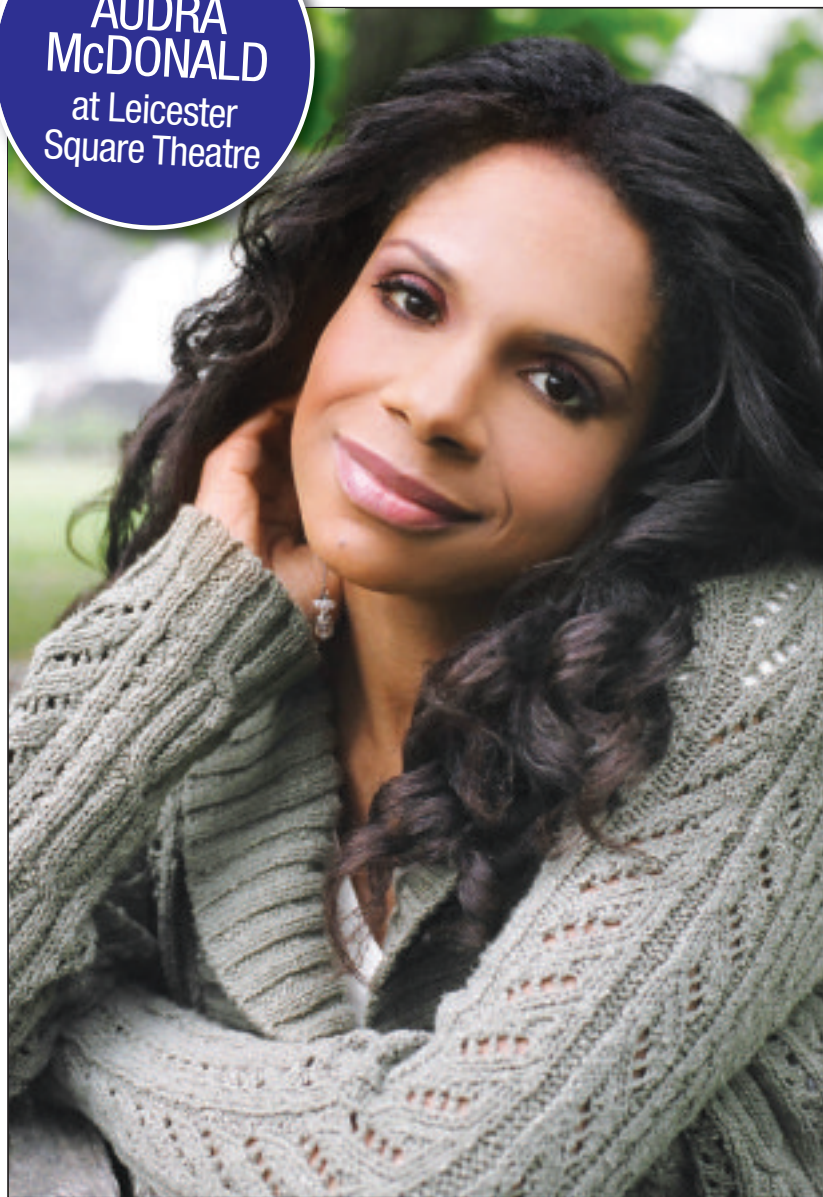
"McDonald was a complete superstar, effortlessly telling deeply affecting stories through song, connecting intuitively with her audience and singing with a ferocity, a gentle touch, a supremely confident and peerlessly matched tone that simply took one's breath away. Time after time."

McDonald holds the record for more Tony best-performance wins than any other actor in history, and is the only person to win all four acting categories.

She married Swenson in 2012 and the couple became parents last year.

Audra McDonald In Concert will run at Leicester Square Theatre on April 12, 13, 14 and 15. For more details, you can visit the website leicestersquaretheatre.com.

Previewing
**AUDRA
McDONALD**
at Leicester
Square Theatre



CHARING Cross Theatre has announced it will stage the world premiere of a brand new musical called *The Braille Legacy*. Inspired by the story of Louis Braille, a man who revolutionised the art of communication for the visually impaired, the show will star Olivier Award-nominated Jerome Pradon, *pictured*.

The word Braille is famous around the world and is the same in all languages. *The Braille Legacy* is supported by the Royal National Institute of Blind People and is the story of a revolution, with a heroic fight for independence, themes of difference, freedom, hope, love and the triumph of human values over adversity.

In Paris in the 19th century, blind people were victims of profound discrimination. Louis Braille, a bright young mind with a mad dream, arrives at the Royal Institute of Blind Youth, searching for the same chance as everyone else – to be free and independent. But he soon discovers that people and things aren't always what they first seem.

By sheer determination and courage he stumbles upon something revolutionary: a simple idea,

a genius invention, a legacy. Two hundred years ago, Louis Braille changed the world by inventing the tactile system of communication, the Braille alphabet, liberating the "People of the Night" and introducing literacy, knowledge and culture to a people who were otherwise trapped. It was their journey into the light.

Pradon's West End credits include the UK premiere of the musical *Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown*, Guillaume in *Martin Guerre*, The Man in *Whistle Down The Wind*, Aragorn in *The Lord Of The Rings* musical, Chris in *Miss Saigon* and Javert in *Les Misérables* in London and Marius in Paris, as well as Judas in the Emmy-winning video of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

The Braille Legacy has an original French book and lyrics by Sebastien Lancrenon, music by Jean-Baptiste Saudray, and an English translation by Ranjit Bolt. Music supervision and orchestrations are by Simon Lee.

The Braille Legacy will run at Charing Cross Theatre from April 10 to June 24. For more details, see charingcrosstheatre.co.uk.

Talk of the town



Crime and Punishment will run at the Jack Studio in Brockley Road, Lewisham, from February 7 to 25

Visit the mind of a murderer

ARROWS & Traps Theatre returns to the Jack Studio in Lewisham with an award-winning adaptation of Dostoyevsky's literary masterpiece *Crime & Punishment*.

A tense psychological thriller on the nature of evil, the story is set in the mind of a murderer, as he relives and explores the thoughts, ideas and feelings that drove him to his horrific crime.

Direct, haunting and relevant, the play becomes a psychological landscape, which creates a thrilling journey into the mind of a killer and his search for redemption. The play promises to be an intimate and spiritual journey, which seeks to unveil hidden dimensions of the human condition.

Four-time Off West End Award Nominated Arrows and Traps present *Crime and Punishment* at the Jack, following their critically-acclaimed and sell-out productions of *Anna Karenina* and *The Gospel According To Philip*.

Crime and Punishment will run at the Jack Studio from 7th – 25th February 2017
www.brockleyjack.co.uk

FANS of improvisation will be treated to a feast of fun this month when the cream of the improv crop will descend on Wilton's Music Hall for a four-night festival, writes Nicky Sweetland.

2016 Olivier Award winners, The Showstoppers, in association with Extempore Theatre & Something for the Weekend, will present *The 2017 London Jam*, culminating in the 10th anniversary London 50-Hour Improvathon.

The 2017 London Jam – Monday, January 16 to Thursday 19 – boasts a stellar line-up of home-grown spontaneous talent from Mischief Theatre – the Olivier-Award winning creators of *The Play That Goes Wrong*; Chortle Award-win-

ning *Austenations: An Improvised Jane Austen Novel*, The Glenda J Collective and members of The Showstoppers themselves, plus Canadian legends The Sufferettes, Oslo's Almost Ibsen and the UK premiere of *The Dungeons & Dragons Show*.

The event also features the all-new Ken Campbell Caper Competition – a day-long 'improv-battle' starring improvisers from around the globe, originally conceived by legendary theatre maverick Ken Campbell.

Then it's a display of comedy athleticism, with *Lord of Thrones* – Friday 20 to Sunday 22 January – as The 10th Annual 50-hour London Improvathon takes over Wilton's Music Hall for a weekend of Tolkien meets George R.R. Martin from

some of the world's funniest performers.

One throne to rule them all. Fifty hours to enjoy! For those wanting to enjoy a few hours of fun, audiences can buy tickets to each self-contained two-hour 'episode' or for those seeking adventure, there's the opportunity to get a festival pass, allowing you access for the full 50 hours.

Playing annually since 2008, this theatrical marathon gathers some of the funniest performers from all over the world every year to appear as guests (dropping in for a few hours) or as main characters going the whole 50-hour mind-bending sleep-defying distance.

After 30 hours without sleep, performers become too tired to censor themselves. Hilarious, unpredictable, and unlike anything else, this is theatre at its most exciting.

You can pop in for one episode, a few, or join the party and stay for the whole thing! There will also be a special 'Family Episode' – Sunday 11am to 1pm – where the action is suitable for children. There will be live music throughout the Improvathon and an all-night bar!

The week of improv began on Monday this week and is being held at Wilton's Music Hall. If you would like any further details, you can visit the website www.thelondonjam.com



Lord of Thrones will get under way on January 20

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Transport for London Notice

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1. Transport for London hereby gives notice that it has made the above named Traffic Order under section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for the purpose specified in paragraph 2. The effect of the Order is summarised in paragraph 3.
2. The purpose of the Order is to enable Gas Main Replacement works to take place on A3212 Chelsea Embankment.
3. The effect of the Order will be to prohibit any vehicle from exceeding a speed limit of 20 M.P.H. on the A3212 Chelsea Embankment between its junctions with Chelsea Bridge Road and Tite Street whilst gas main replacement works is occurring.

The Order will be effective from 12:01 AM on 23rd January 2017 until 11:59 PM on 30th April 2017 or when those works have been completed, whichever is the sooner. The prohibition will apply only during such times and to such extent as shall from time to time be indicated by traffic signs.

Dated this 17th day of January 2017

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1) (HARWOOD TERRACE) TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate Water Main works to be carried out in the above named road, it made an Order the effect of which prohibits vehicular traffic in a section of the above named road.
2. Whilst works are in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in a section of Harwood Terrace between its junction with Waterford Road and No. 19 Harwood Terrace.
3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would be in place via Imperial Road, Bagley's Road, New Kings Road and right onto Waterford Road.
4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for works vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.
5. The Order will come into operation on the 23rd January 2017 and will be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.
6. Works are expected to commence on Monday 23rd January 2017 and last for 11 days. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 13th day of January 2017

Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle

Chief Transport Planner

Transport and Highways

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1) (MUNSTER ROAD) TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate Thames Water works to be carried out in the above named road; it intends to make an Order the effect of which would prohibit northbound vehicular traffic in a section of the above named road.
2. Whilst works are in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed in a northbound direction, stop, wait, load or unload in a section of Munster Road between its junctions with Fulham Road and Feldon Street.
3. 2 alternative routes for traffic in article 2 would be in place:
i) Via Rostrevor Road & Swift Street;
ii) Via Durrell Road & Hestercombe Avenue.
4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for works vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.
5. The Order would come into operation on the 4th February 2017 and would be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.
6. Works would be expected to commence on Saturday 4th February 2017 and last for 3 days. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 5th day of January 2017

Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle

Chief Transport Planner

Transport and Highways

SCHEDULE 2 Notices under articles 13 and 36 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Proposed development at Unit 4 Waldo Road, London NW10 6AW (ref. 2016/04248/FUL) I give notice that Mr. Chris Flynn is applying to the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Council for planning permission to carry out the following development: excavation of front garden and part of rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the creation of basement; erection of an additional floor at roof level in connection with the creation of one four bedroom self-contained flat at basement and ground floor levels and two self-contained flats at first and second floor levels at Unit 4 Waldo Road, London NW10 6AW.

Any owner* of the land or tenant** who wishes to make representations about this application should write to the Council at Hammersmith Planning and Development, King Street, London W6 9JU (W: www.lbhf.gov.uk) by 24.01.17.

* "owner" means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than 7 years, or, in the case of development consisting of the winning or working of minerals, a person entitled to an interest in a mineral in the land (other than oil, gas, coal, gold or silver). ** "tenant" means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.

Signed Paul Vick architects Ltd

Date: 21.12.16

Statement of owners' rights The grant of planning permission does not affect owners' rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or in a lease. Statement of agricultural tenants' rights The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenants' security of tenure.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1) (FOXGLOVE STREET) TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate traffic sign works to be carried out in the above named road; it intends to make an Order the effect of which would prohibit vehicular traffic in a section of the above named road.
2. Whilst works are in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in a section of Foxglove Street, Acton.
3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would not be provided.
4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for works vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.
5. The Order would come into operation on the 11th February 2017 and would be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.
6. Works would be expected to commence on Saturday 11th February 2017 and last for 18 months. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 13th day of January 2017

Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle

Chief Transport Planner

Transport and Highways

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1) (HARWOOD TERRACE) TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate Water Main works to be carried out in the above named road, it made an Order the effect of which prohibits vehicular traffic in a section of the above named road.
2. Whilst works are in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in a section of Harwood Terrace between its junction with Waterford Road and No. 19 Harwood Terrace.
3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would be in place via Imperial Road, Bagley's Road, New Kings Road and right onto Waterford Road.
4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for works vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.
5. The Order will come into operation on the 23rd January 2017 and will be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.
6. Works are expected to commence on Monday 23rd January 2017 and last for 11 days. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 13th day of January 2017

Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle

Chief Transport Planner

Transport and Highways

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

I give notice that applications have been made to the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham as follows:

FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA

Bridge Avenue Mansions
Bridge Avenue London W6 9JB 2016/04596/FUL

Erection of an additional floor at roof level with terrace area on top of Nos 1-8 Bridge Avenue Mansions in connection with the creation of a 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x studio apartment.

54 Queensmill Road
London SW6 6JS 2017/00008/FUL

Erection of a front roof extension; erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition; erection of a part one part two storey rear extension at ground and first floor levels; and excavation of the front garden and part of the rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the creation of a new basement.

96 - 98 King Street London W6 0QW 2016/05223/FUL

Erection of an additional floor to replace the existing roof at roof level; erection of rear extensions at first and second floor level in connection with the change of use from office (Class B1) to 4 x one bedroom and 3 x two bedroom flats (Class C3).

12 And 13 Hammersmith Terrace London W6 9TS 2017/00016/FUL

Installation of a gate to existing boundary wall between gardens of Nos. 12 and 13 Hammersmith Terrace.

583 Fulham Road London SW6 5UA 2016/05464/FUL

Erection of an additional floor at fourth floor level in connection with the creation of 1 x one bedroom self-contained flat following partial demolition of the water tank room.

35 Winslow Road London W6 9SF 2016/05285/FUL

Retention of the rear roof extension with alterations to reduce the height of the ridge to 200mm, reinstatement of the original pitch of the front roof slope alterations to the rear extension on top of the back addition at second floor level to form a 70 degree rear roof slope and the installation of 3no rooflights in the front roofslope.

North Lodge Hammersmith Cemetery Margravine Gardens London W6 8RL 2016/05508/FUL

Erection of a part one, part two storey rear extension at ground and first floor level following partial demolition of the single storey back addition; excavation under the footprint of the building to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement; erection of new external staircases from basement to ground floor level; associated landscaping.

52 - 70 Fitz-George Avenue London W14 0SW 2016/04789/FUL

Creation of three self-contained flats (1x1 bed and 2 X 2 beds) at rear lower ground floor level through change of use of the existing basement storage area and excavating and enlarging the existing basement level, creation of new lightwells and associated installation of new windows and doors, and erection of a bike store (Additional information received).

72 Cloncurry Street London SW6 6DU 2016/05541/FUL

Amendments to previously approved planning permission ref: 2015/03248/FUL granted on 3rd September 2015 to include the replacement of the existing windows and doors with new double glazed windows and doors alterations to the rooflights above the main roof and above the roof of second floor and first floor back additions; alterations to the rooflight above the roof of single storey side extension.

1 Dalling Road London W6 0JD 2016/05544/FUL

Change of use of the first floor level and part of the ground floor level from Class A2 use to Class C3 use; erection of a front and rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height in connection with the creation of 1 x two bedroom self-contained residential flat at first and second floor level; alterations to the fenestration at first floor level to include the installation of new windows to replace the existing; installation of a new door at ground floor level to the front elevation.

57 And 59 Cardross Street London W6 0DP 2016/05468/FUL

Erection of a rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height by 200mm at no. 57 Cardross Street; erection of rear extensions at second floor level, on top of the existing back additions to both properties as 57 and 59 Cardross Street.

Fiat Second Floor 30 Fairholme Road London W14 9JX 2016/05602/FUL

Erection of an additional floor over part of roof level, including the formation of a terrace to the front elevation; erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of the existing back addition, in connection with the conversion of the existing two bedroom flat to 1no. one bedroom self-contained flat and 1no. two bedroom self-contained flat.

Unit 4 Waldo Works Waldo Road London NW10 6AW 2016/04248/FUL

Change of use from Light Industry (Class B1c) to Residential (Class C3); excavation of front garden and part of rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the creation of the basement; erection of an additional floor at roof level in connection with the creation of 1 x 4 bedroom self-contained flat at basement and ground floor levels and 2 x 2 self-contained flats at first and second floor levels.

Merton Villa Arminger Road London W12 7BB 2016/05584/FUL

Erection of a rear roof extension; installation of 3no. rooflights in the front roofslope; installation of bi-folding doors in the rear elevation at ground floor level to replace existing windows, following removal of existing external WC in the rear garden.

Flat Ground Floor 21 Richford Street London W6 7HJ 2016/05343/FUL

Amendments to previously approved planning permission ref: 2015/04934/FUL granted 15th December 2015 to include the installation of 2no windows in place of the doors at upper ground floor level to the rear elevation.

Lycett Place London W12 2016/05388/VAR

Removal of condition 14 of planning permission ref: 2015/00755/FUL granted 16th April 2015 to allow the occupiers of the new residential units to apply for street parking permits.

3 Beaumont Crescent London W14 9LX 2016/05182/FUL

Erection of an additional floor at roof level; erection of rear extensions at lower ground and upper ground floor level; formation of a roof terrace at third floor level; conversion of the dwellinghouse into 4 x one bedroom and 4 x two bedroom self-contained flats (Additional Drawings).

587 - 591 Fulham Road London SW6 5UB 2016/05517/FUL

Erection of part one, part two storey additional floors at roof level in connection with the creation of 2 x one bedroom and 1 x two bedroom self-contained flats; formation of roof terraces at third and fourth floor levels; alterations to the rear fenestration of the building.

25 Niton Street London SW6 6NH 2016/05576/FUL

Erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition following the demolition of existing second floor back addition; excavation of the front and rear garden to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement; erection of an external staircase from basement to ground floor level at the rear of the property; installation of a new rooflight above the main flat roof at roof level; installation of French doors and a Juliet balcony in the rear roof slope; alterations to the pitched roof of the single storey back addition to form a flat roof and installation of new rooflights above the roof of the single storey back addition; installation of new doors to replace the existing doors at ground floor level to the rear elevation.

25 Niton Street London SW6 6NH 2016/05579/FUL

Excavation of the front and rear garden to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement; erection of an external staircase from basement to ground floor level at the rear of the property; installation of a new window above the main flat roof at roof level; alterations to the pitched

roof of the single storey back addition to form a flat roof and installation of rooflights above the roof of the single storey back addition; installation of new doors to replace the existing doors at ground floor level to the rear elevation.

91 Chesson Road London W14 9QS 2016/05574/FUL

Erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition.

91 Chesson Road London W14 9QS 2016/05577/FUL

Amendments to previously approved planning permission ref: 2016/04094/FUL to include the installation of French doors in place of the window and the erection of privacy screens around the flat roof at second floor level to the rear elevation, in connection with its use as a terrace.

Former BBC Television Centre Wood Lane London W12 2016/05406/FUL

Use of the roof of the Multi-storey Car Park for a rooftop restaurant event for a temporary period from 3 May 2017 to 2 October 2017

Bush Theatre 7 Uxbridge Road London W12 8LJ 2016/05401/ADV

Display of an internally illuminated fascia sign; display of a non-illuminated fascia sign; display of 4 illuminated poster boxes on the building and 3 non-illuminated on the gate.

The Gateway Site White City Estate London 2016/05465/FUL

Relocation of existing approved hoarding and landscaping works to west side of car park at the Gateway site.

211 Hammersmith Grove London W6 0NP 2016/04635/FUL

Erection of an infill extension at lower ground floor level to the front elevation; installation of a new door to replace the existing window at lower ground floor level at the side of the front external steps and the formation of steps to the new door; installation of gates, railings and brick piers at the front of the property; installation of handrails on both sides of the front entrance steps (Amended drawings received).

Fulham Palace Garden Centre Bishop's Avenue London SW6 6EE 2016/05555/ADV

Display of a externally illuminated fascia sign on the Fulham Palace Road elevation; display of two fascia externally illuminated boards one on the corner of Bishops Avenue and Fulham Palace Road and one on the corners of Bishops Park Road and Fulham Palace Road.

24 Tabor Road London W6 0BW 2017/00026/FUL

Erection of a rear roof extension, involving an increase in the ridge height by 200mm; installation of two rooflights in the front roofslope; erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of existing back addition.

Flat First Floor 5 Amor Road London W6 0AN 2017/00027/VAR

Variation of Condition 2 and Condition 4 Planning Permission 2016/03701/FUL granted 29th

September 2016 for the 'Erection of a rear roof extension; installation of two rooflights in the front roofslope; installation of a new door to rear elevation at second floor level and erection of obscured glass around the flat roof at second floor level in connection with its use as a terrace'. Amendment sought to reduce the height of the obscured glass screening and increase the height of the parapet wall.

42 Moylan Road London W6 8QB 2016/05586/FUL

Erection of single storey extension to the side of the back addition, erection of two storey extension at ground and first floor level to the rear of the existing back addition; installation of new access gate to the boundary wall on the Disbrowe Road frontage to replace existing double entrance gates.

Westfield London Shopping Centre Ariel Way London 2016/05593/ADV

Display of an internally illuminated fascia sign.

27 Lochaline Street London W6 9SJ 2016/05335/FUL

Erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition; erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side and rear of the existing back addition; excavation of the front and rear garden to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement; conversion of the existing property into 2 x one bedroom and 1 x two bedroom self-contained flats.

FOR CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT (DEMOLITION WORK)

FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

12 And 13 Hammersmith Terrace London W6 9TS 2016/05542/LBC

Installation of internal doors at upper ground and second floor level to connect Nos. 12 and 13 Hammersmith Terrace; installation of a gate to existing boundary wall between gardens of Nos. 12 and 13 Hammersmith Terrace.

Former BBC Television Centre Wood Lane London W12 2016/05369/LBC

Minor internal alterations to Studios 1-3 to provide new post production Edit Suites.

FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE SETTING OR CONTEXT OF A LISTED BUILDING

Bridge Avenue Mansions Bridge Avenue London W6 9JB 2016/04596/FUL

Erection of an additional floor at roof level with terrace area on top of Nos 1-8 Bridge Avenue Mansions in connection with the creation of a 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x studio apartment.

12 And 13 Hammersmith Terrace London W6 9TS 2017/00016/FUL

Installation of a gate to existing boundary wall between gardens of Nos. 12 and 13 Hammersmith Terrace.

North Lodge Hammersmith Cemetery Margravine Gardens London W6 8RL 2016/05508/FUL

Erection of a part one, part two storey rear extension at ground and first floor level following partial demolition of the single

storey back addition; excavation under the footprint of the building to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement; erection of new external staircases from basement to ground floor level; associated landscaping.

24 Tabor Road London W6 0BW 2017/00026/FUL

Erection of a rear roof extension, involving an increase in the ridge height by 200mm; installation of two rooflights in the front roofslope; erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of existing back addition. Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by 6th February 2017. See below for ways of commenting on applications.

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2013 NOTICES UNDER REGULATION 13

1 Edgarley Terrace London SW6 6QE 2016/05135/FUL

I give notice that Mr Hristo Mitchkovski is applying to HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL for planning permission to carry out the following development:

Demolition of the existing building with the exception of the front facade, erection of a part one, part two, part three storey plus-basement single family dwellinghouse; installation of new windows and garage doors to the side elevation. Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by **6th February 2017**. See below for ways of commenting on applications.

Signed: **NIGEL PALLACE**
Executive Director for Transport and Technical Services

on behalf of HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL

You can view applications, make comments and monitor their progress on our website: www.lbhf.gov.uk/planning. Click on the 'Planning Online' logo on the Planning Home Page.

You can also E-mail comments to: plancomments@lbhf.gov.uk

You can also inspect details of applications using computers at our office **RECEPTION FIRST FLOOR HAMMERSMITH TOWN HALL EXTENSION KING STREET W6** between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays. If you want to make comments on applications please E-mail them through our website or post them to **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE ENVIRONMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT TOWN HALL KING STREET W6 9JU** by the date shown above. Please include the application reference number and the name of the planning officer. We will try to consider any representations received after the date indicated but this cannot be guaranteed so please reply promptly. For initial enquiries call our information and reception service on **020 8753 1081** or **020 8753 1082**.

PUBLIC NOTICE

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

DESIGNATION OF AN AREA FOR SELECTIVE LICENSING 2016

Section 80, Housing Act 2004

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with Section 83 Housing Act 2004 (Notification Requirements Relating to Designation) that the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham acting as local housing authority in exercise of its powers under Section 80 of the Housing Act 2004 has designated the area described in paragraph 4 for selective licensing.

CITATION, COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION

1. This designation may be cited as the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Designation for an Area for Selective Licensing 2016.
2. This designation is made on **13 December 2016** and shall come into force on **5 June 2017**.
3. This designation shall cease to have effect on **4 June 2022** or earlier if the Council revokes the scheme under section 84 of the Act.

AREA TO WHICH THE DESIGNATION APPLIES

4. The designation applies to the following streets as listed at Annex A.

APPLICATION OF THE DESIGNATION

5. This designation applies to any house which is let or occupied under a tenancy or licence within the area described in paragraph 4 unless:
 - a) the house is a house in multiple occupation and is required to be licensed under Part 2 of the Act;
 - b) the tenancy or licence of the house has been granted by a registered social landlord;
 - c) the house is subject to an Interim or Final Management Order under Part 4 of the Act;
 - d) the house is subject to a temporary exemption under section 86 of the Act; or
 - e) the house is occupied under a tenancy or licence which is exempt under the Act or the occupation is of a building or part of a building so exempt as defined in The Selective Licensing of Houses (Specified Exemptions) (England) Order 2006 SI 370/2006

EFFECT OF THE DESIGNATION

6. Subject to sub paragraphs 5(a) to (e) every house in the area specified in paragraph 4 that is occupied under a tenancy or licence shall be required to be licensed under section 85 of the Act.

INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS/APPLICATION FOR LICENCE

7. If you are a landlord, managing agent, or a tenant, and wish to inspect this designation, apply for a licence or require further information, this is available from:

**Private Housing, Environmental Health,
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham,
Town Hall, King Street,
Hammersmith London W6 9JU
Email: phs@lbhf.gov.uk Tel: 020 8753 1221**

The designation does not require confirmation by the Secretary of State and falls within a general approval issued by the Secretary of State under Section 82 of the Act, namely the Housing Act 2004: Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Selective Licensing of Other Residential Accommodation (England) General Approval 2010.

Any private landlord, property manager or tenant owning, managing or occupying a property within this area is advised to seek advice from the Council's Housing Standards Team by telephone on **020 8753 1221** by email to **phs@lbhf.gov.uk** or in writing to London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, Town Hall, King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9JU to determine whether their property is affected by the designation. Private landlords who own property in the area or any person that controls or manages property in the area will be required from **5 June 2017** to apply for a licence.

ENFORCEMENT

8. Upon the Designation coming into force on 5 June 2017 any person who operates a licensable property without a licence shall be guilty of an offence under Section 95(1) of the Act. A person who breaches a condition of a licence is liable to prosecution and upon summary conviction liable to an unlimited fine.

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Executive approval 12 December 2016

Annex A: Streets in Hammersmith & Fulham where Selective Licensing applies

Adie Road	Harwood Terrace	St John's Close
Aldensley Road	Hawksmoor Street	Stanwick Road
Armada Road	Hazlitt Mews	Station Approach
Askew Crescent	Hilary Close	Sterne Street
Askew Road	Hofland Road	Studland Street
Aspenlea Road	Hopgood Street	Sullivan Road
Astrop Mews	Imperial Road	Talgarth Road
Astrop Terrace	Jerdan Place	Tamarisk Square
Augustine Road	Kenmont Gardens	Telephone Place
Barb Mews	Kilmarsh Road	Terrick Street
Basuto Road	King Street	Trevanion Road
Batoum Gardens	King's Road	Tyravley Road
Batson Street	Lalor Street	Upper Mall
Beaconsfield Terrace Road	Lamington Street	Uxbridge Road
Beavor Lane	Lanfrey Place	Dalling Road
Bentworth Road	Lanfrey Road	Daves Road
Beryl Road	Larnach Road	Devonport Road
Bishop's Avenue	Leamore Street	Down Place
Bloemfontein Road	Lettice Street	Dunraven Road
Bloemfontein Way	Leyfield Road	Eddiscombe Road
Bothwell Street	Lilac Street	Effie Place
Bramble Gardens	Lime Grove	Effie Road
Britannia Road	Loris Road	Elysium Place
Broomhouse Lane	Lower Mall	Epirus Mews
Bryony Road	Luxemburg Gardens	Erconwald Street
Bulwer Street	Macbeth Street	Fane Street
Byam Street	Macfarlane Road	Farm Lane
Cactus Walk	Mandela Close	Felden Street
Cambria Street	Palliser Road	Fielcing Road
Cambridge Grove	Parsons Green	Filmer Road
Cassidy Road	Parsons Green Lane	Firth Gardens
Cathnor Road	Peterborough Mews	Maurice Street
Caverswall Street	Poplar Mews	Meldon Close
Caxton Road	Porten Road	Melina Road
Chancellors Road	Primula Street	Melrose Terrace
Charlow Close	Purcell Crescent	Micklethwaite Road
Clancarty Road	Ravenscourt Avenue	Milson Road
Colehill Lane	Ravenscourt Park	Molesford Road
Commonwealth Avenue	Ravenscourt Place	Moore Park Road
Coningham Mews	Raynham Road	New King's Road
Coulter Road	Redmore Road	Norbroke Street
Crabtree Lane	Reporton Road	Normand Road
Daffodil Street	Rickett Street	North End Crescent
Foxglove Street	Rigault Road	North End Road
Frithville Gardens	Rockley Road	Old Oak Road
Fulham Broadway	Rosebury Road	Ollgar Close
Fulham High Street	Ryecroft Street	Ormiston Grove
Fulham Park Road	Scrubs Lane	Overstone Road
Fulham Road	Shepherd's Bush Place	Vereker Road
Galloway Road	Shepherd's Bush Road	Wallflower Street
Glenroy Street	Sherbrooke Road	Waterford Road
Glenhorne Road	Shortlands	Watermeadow Lane
Goldhawk Mews Goldhawk Road	Snowbury Road	Wells Road
Goodwin Road	South Black Lion Lane	Wood Lane
Gorleston Street	Southcombe Street	Woodlawn Road
Grimston Road	Southerton Road	Woodstock Grove
Gwyn Close	Spring Vale Terrace	Yew Tree Road

PUBLIC NOTICE

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

DESIGNATION OF AN AREA FOR ADDITIONAL LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMOs)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with Section 59 Housing Act 2004 (Notification Requirements Relating to Designation) that the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham acting as local housing authority in exercise of its powers under Section 56 of the Housing Act 2004 ("the Act") has designated for additional licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation ("HMOs") the area described in paragraph 4.

CITATION, COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION

1. This designation may be cited as the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Designation for an Area for Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation 2016.
2. This designation is made on **13 December 2016** and shall come into force on **5 June 2017**.
3. This designation shall cease to have effect on **4 June 2022** or earlier if the Council revokes the scheme under section 60 of the Act.

AREA TO WHICH THE DESIGNATION APPLIES

4. The designation shall apply to the whole area of the district of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

APPLICATION OF THE DESIGNATION

5. This designation applies to all HMOs as defined by section 254 of the Housing Act 2004 that are occupied by 3 or more persons comprising 2 or more households, within the area described in paragraph 4 unless -
 - a) the building is of a description specified in Annex A (Buildings that are not HMOs for the purpose of the Act- other than Part 1);
 - b) the HMO is subject to an Interim or Final Management Order under Part 4 of the Act;
 - c) the HMO is subject to a temporary exemption under section 62 of the Act; or
 - d) the HMO is required to be licensed under section 55 (2) (a) of the Act (mandatory licensing).

EFFECT OF THE DESIGNATION

6. Subject to sub paragraphs 5(a) to (d) above, every HMO of the description specified in that paragraph in the area specified in paragraph 4 shall be required to be licensed under section 61 of the Act.

The designation was given general approval by the Executive Member for Housing under a delegated authority from the Executive of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Council. The designation falls within a description of designations in relation to which the Secretary of State has given a general approval under section 58 of the Housing Act 2004, namely The Housing Act 2004: Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Selective Licensing of Other Residential Accommodation (England) General Approval 2015 which came into force on the 1st April 2015.

A person having control of or managing a prescribed HMO must apply to the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham for a licence.

INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS/APPLICATION FOR LICENCE

7. Any landlord, managing agent or other person managing a HMO or any tenant within the Borough may inspect the designation, apply for a licence or seek further information or advice as to whether their property is affected by the designation from:

**Private Housing, Environmental Health, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, Town Hall, King Street
Hammersmith, London W6 9JU
Email: phs@lbhf.gov.uk Tel: 020 8753 1221**

ENFORCEMENT

8. Upon the Designation coming into force on 5 June 2017 any person who fails to apply for a licence in the designated area shall be guilty of an offence under Section 72(1) of the Act, and shall be liable to prosecution and liable to an unlimited fine. In addition, they may be required to repay up to 12 months' rent if the tenant or the Council, in the case of housing benefit tenants, apply to the Residential Property Tribunal under the provisions of section 73 and section 74 of the Housing Act 2004 for a rent repayment order.

Annex A: Buildings that are not HMOs for the purpose of the Act- other than Part 1 4

Buildings controlled or managed by public sector bodies etc 5

1. A building where the person managing or having control of it is 6
 - (a) a local housing authority
 - (aa) a non-profit registered provider of social housing
 - (b) a police and crime commissioner under section 1 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 or the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime under section 3 of the same Act.
 - (c) a fire and rescue authority under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
 - (d) a health service body within the meaning of section 9 of the National Health Service Act 2006
 - (e) a body which is a registered social landlord under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996.
 - (f) a profit-making registered provider of social housing where it is social housing within the meaning of Part 2 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 7

Buildings controlled or managed by a co-operative society 8

2. A building where -
 - (a) the person managing or having control of it is a co-operative society whose rules are such as to secure that each of the conditions set out below is met, and
 - (b) no person who occupies premises in the building does so by virtue of an assured tenancy, a secure tenancy or a protected tenancy 9
- The conditions are
- (a) that membership of the society is restricted to persons who are occupiers or prospective occupiers of buildings managed or controlled by the society,
 - (b) that all management decisions of the society are made by the members (or a specified quorum of members) at a general meeting which all members are entitled to, and invited to, attend,
 - (c) that each member has equal voting rights at such a meeting, and
 - (d) that, if a person occupies premises in the building and is not a member, that person is an occupier of the premises only as a result of sharing occupation of them with a member at the member's invitation.

For these purposes "co-operative society" means a body that-

- (a) is registered as a co-operative society under the 2014 Act or is a pre-commencement society (within the meaning of that Act) that meets the condition in section 2(2)(a)(i) of that Act, and is neither-
 - (i) a non-profit registered provider of social housing, nor
 - (ii) registered as a social landlord under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996.
- 4 Schedule 14 of the Act and SI 2006/373
 - 5 Paragraph 2 of schedule 14.
 - 6 For the definition of "person managing" and "person having control" see section 263 of the Act.
 - 7 Paragraph 2A of Schedule 14.
 - 8 Paragraph 2B of Schedule 14.
 - 9 "assured tenancy" has the same meaning as in Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988; "protected tenancy" has the same meaning as in the Rent Act 1977; "secure tenancy" has the same meaning as in Part 4 of the Housing Act 1985.
 - 10 The 2014 Act" means the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

Buildings regulated by other enactments 11

3. A tenancy, licence or occupation of a house which is regulated under the following enactments:

- (a) sections 87 to 87D of the Children Act 1989
- (b) section 43 (4) of the Prison Act 1952
- (c) section 34 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002
- (d) The Secure Training Centre Rules 1998 12
- (e) The Prison Rules 1999 13
- (f) The Young Offender Institute Rules 2000 14
- (g) The Detention Centre Rules 2001 15 16
- (h) The Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000 (Approved Premises) Regulations 2001 16
- (i) The Care Homes Regulations 2001 17
- (j) The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 18
- (k) The Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002 19

Certain student lettings etc 20

4. A building -
 - (i) which is managed or controlled by a specified educational establishment or is of a specified description of such establishments and
 - (ii) the occupiers of the house or dwelling are undertaking a full time course of further or higher education at the specified establishment 21 and
 - (iii) the house or dwelling is being managed in conformity with an Approved Code of Practice for the management of exempted accommodation under section 233 of the Act. 22

Religious communities 23

5. A building which is occupied principally for the purpose of a religious community whose principal occupation is prayer, contemplation, education or the relief of suffering except if the building is a converted block of flats to which section 257 of the Act applies.

Buildings occupied by owners 24

6. A building which is only occupied by -
 - (i) one or more persons who hold the freehold or a leasehold interest granted for a term of more than 21 years of the whole, or any part of, the building
 - (ii) and/or any member of the household 25 of that person or persons but this exemption does not apply to a converted block of flats to which section 257 of the Act applies, except for ascertaining the status of any flat within the block.

Buildings occupied by resident landlord etc 26

7. A building which is occupied by a person or persons to whom paragraph 6 applies (subject to the proviso therein) and no more than two 27 other persons, not forming part of the owner's household.

Buildings occupied by two persons 28

8. Any building which is only occupied by two persons (forming two households)

Meaning of "building"

9. In this annex a "building" includes a part of the building 29
 - 11 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 14.
 - 12 SI1998/472 as amended by 2003/3005
 - 13 SI1999/728 as amended by SI 2000/1794, SI 2000/2641, SI 2001/1149, SI 2002/2116, SI 2002/3135, SI 2003/3301 and 2005/669
 - 14 SI2000/3371 as amended by SI 2002/2117, SI 2002/3135 and 2005/897
 - 15 SI 2001/238 NB Section 66(4) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 provides that the reference to a detention centre is to be construed as a reference to a removal centre as defined in Part VII of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
 - 16 SI2001/850
 - 17 2001/3965 as amended by SI 2002/865, SI 2003/534, SI 2003/1590, SI 2003/1703, SI 2003/1845, s2004/664, SI 2004/696, 2004/1770, 2004/2071 and 2004/3168
 - 18 SI 2015/541
 - 19 sa 2002/3213 as amended by SI2004/664, 2004/865 and 2004/3168
 - 20 Paragraph 4 of Schedule 14
 - 21 Houses in Multiple Occupation (Specified Educational Establishments) (England) Regulations 2013/1601
 - 22 Housing (Codes of Management Practice) (Student Accommodation) (England) Order 2010/2615
 - 23 Paragraph 5 of Schedule 14
 - 24 Paragraph 6 of Schedule 14
 - 25 For the definition of "household" see section 258 (2) and paragraphs 3 and 4 of SI 373/2006

Ollie delighted as tide turns in style for QPR



AFTER a miserable start to Ian Holloway's Queens Park Rangers homecoming spoiled by six consecutive defeats, the tide has turned with three straight Championship victories.

"I'm bursting with pride," enthused Holloway after last Thursday's impressive and thoroughly deserved 1-0 win at promotion-chasing Reading, where Jamie Mackie couldn't fail to sweep home the decisive 28th-minute goal from close-range.

"That's a really good team we've played tonight and we've played so well - I couldn't be more proud.

"We've freshened things up over the last few weeks and we got our reward again tonight.

"That's three in a row now and hopefully it's onwards and upwards because these boys deserve it."

With striker Sebastian Polter sold to German second division club Union Berlin last week for an undisclosed fee, QPR needed a front-runner to come good - and they found the answer in the 31-year-old Mackie, who showed that he still has something to offer despite being plagued by hamstring and ankle injuries.

"Jamie Mackie epitomises QPR and what a lovely goal it was too," said Holloway.

"He's a machine. Four matches in such a short space of time after eight months out - it's remarkable really.

"And what about Pawel (Szwedek)? He was unplayable tonight. He was man-of-the-match and deserved the trophy."

The Polish winger says his English is improving but if he can keep reproducing performances like this, no-one will question his understanding of what is required to meet the demands of second-tier football.

Another plus for Rangers was the inclusion of four youngsters. Darnell Furlong, Ryan Manning (playing his third game in succession), Michael Doughty and Brandon Conley (who has since resumed his loan spell with League Two's Grimsby Town) all featured at Reading.

"That was the QPR I know and love, the QPR our fans want to see week after week. We've set a high benchmark and now we've got to push on," said Holloway.

Successful road trips to Wolverhampton Wanderers and Reading, with the recent home win over Ipswich Town sandwiched in between, have elevated QPR to 17th place, eight points above the relegation zone.

But Hoops face two tough examinations of their recovery process.

In-form West London neighbours Fulham visit Loftus Road on Saturday for the televised lunchtime kick-off (12.30pm), before QPR's next away game - at league leaders Newcastle United.

● IN a throwback to the "good old days", QPR will be playing a home game at 3pm on a Saturday for the first time since, probably... Southern Rail trains last ran on time.

Rangers' home fixture against Burton Albion, previously scheduled for Tuesday, February 14, has been brought forward to Saturday, January 28 at the request of both clubs.

Both Rangers and the Brewers were knocked out of the FA Cup at the third-

round stage, allowing this fixture change to take place. Sky Sports' TV schedules have played havoc with QPR's fixtures this season - Saturday's derby with Fulham will be their fifth live appearance on the telly since the start of December.

Wigan Athletic, who were originally due to visit Shepherd's Bush on January 28, will now be in W12 on Tuesday, February 21 (7.45pm) as a result of their involvement in the FA Cup fourth round.

● QPR have cited staff wage cuts as the reason for declining to cover their full estimated £50,000 cost of hosting a benefit match to aid club legend Stan Bowles.

Steve Flannery, on behalf of fans' groups, met Rangers' chief executive Lee Hoos last week hoping the club would agree to fully finance a match aimed at raising funds to help towards the future care of Bowles, who is suffering from Alzheimer's.

While the club say they remain fully supportive, they insist the onus is on supporters to find ways to cover bills for stewarding, police etc.

Flannery told *LWN Sport*: "Lee Hoos says his budget to run the club, both at the stadium and training ground, means he doesn't have the £50,000 to pay the costs earmarked.

"He says his staff have had their wages frozen for four years, and there have been several redundancies, due to the recovery from previous financial mismanagement on the playing side - overpaid, washed-up players on huge contracts.

"He said that even if the Rangers owners agreed to stump up the £50,000, which they surely must have somewhere, he would fall on his sword, on principle, and not allow it. He said that his staff are overstretched and wouldn't have the time to do the groundwork needed to organise it."

In a statement issued by the club last week, Hoos responded to criticism of QPR via social media.

He said: "First things first, to set the record straight. QPR, as a club, welcome the proposal of a Stan Bowles benefit match.

"We are determined to help put on an event for Stan that supports his care and raises money.

"Part of that is having the right committee in place, which needs to be made up by fans with support from the club.

"I had a meeting with the Stan Bowles Benefit Match committee - a group of QPR supporters - earlier in the season, where I once again reiterated our support of assisting in the set-up of a benefit match for Stan.

"The idea was basing it around the usual procedure for a testimonial, whereby the club grants the game and works with the testimonial committee to drive the plan forward but all costs are recovered from the revenue and the rest is distributed by the committee to the recipient. This is how any testimonial works.

"The additional costs I mention relate to third-party costs, namely police, stewarding and traffic management order.

"What's more, I believe the committee stand a far better chance of cutting a deal with third-party contractors by pulling on their heart strings than we have as a club. The contractors will simply view a deal with the club as another commercial transaction, a point I made to Steve Flannery at our meeting.

"The key discussion was formed around raising enough money to make a meaningful difference to Stan's care, which naturally means the event itself running at a profit.

"The committee said they would go away and do their due diligence, while also seeking potential sponsorship opportunities to the forecast sum of approximately £50,000.

"This should be about everybody pitching in - and not creating an us-and-them mentality which I'm led to believe is how it's being portrayed at the moment.

"My goal is for everyone to be able to participate and make a contribution for the greater good of this benefit match.

"This is supposed to be about the club putting on an event - that means supporters, club employees, and the hierarchy of the club - yet the current feeling from the committee and others is that we should fit the bill anyway, under the theory that 'the owners are rich - so let them pay for it'. That's not my interpretation of everyone pitching in.

"Based on the expenses that would be paid out of the revenue, the absolute maximum cost per supporter to contribute to putting on this match, based on Steve's projections of an 18,000 sell-out crowd, would be £2.20 per supporter. I'm sure you'd agree, that's a reasonable amount and one that ensures everyone comes together and plays their part.

"Taking this forward, which we are determined to do, we want to help reshape the organisational structure of the committee so that there is the right balance of skills in order to achieve the result we want: for this game to go ahead and raise money for Stan.

"If anyone has professional skills that they believe can help, or has testimonial experience, please contact Andy Rees at the club via email at andy@qpr.co.uk.

"He will then make the necessary introductions.

"Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to help assist in hosting this event, and I truly hope we can get this proposal over the line, working together for the greater good of the legendary Stan, who I have to say, having only met him for the first time in the last 18 months or so, is an incredible character, befitting of such a day.

"The committee needs to present a concrete plan, which we can assist with. Any project that would have a turnover of £50,000-plus requires proper planning and due diligence.

"But taking to social media to vent frustrations, when only one side of the story is being told with an extreme amount of bias, is certainly not the way to move this forward.

"Here's hoping this update will provide some perspective and help us move forward - collectively."

Flannery claims that former QPR and England boss Terry Venables has agreed to manage an All-Star team to play against Rangers in the benefit match.

He told *LWN*: "And it's been suggested that we might be able to reduce the staging costs from £50,000 to £37,500 if we can negotiate discounts, particularly in respect of stewarding."

Members of the benefit committee will meet again at the Crown and Sceptre pub in Shepherd's Bush today (Wednesday) to discuss their next move.

China poser for Chelsea ace Costa

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"I don't think it (the Diego situation) is something that will affect us. We did well again with the guys up front. That's good for us."

Against Leicester, Chelsea flourished with a reshaped attacking front three of Eden Hazard flanked by Willian and Pedro.

"We have the quality to replace Diego," said Courtois. "He is important for us but if he is not there for one game, we can call on another one. There is obviously a different way of playing, because against Robert Huth and Wes Morgan there is no point in giving long balls to Eden Hazard, Willian and Pedro. But we did well and were able to control the game and early moments."

Courtois confirms that there appears to be a positivity about the set-up at the moment, irrespective of what's going on off the pitch.

"We are very happy, everyone is happy at Chelsea at the moment," he said. "If you are in first place with a seven-point lead, it helps. It helps that you are winning, it helps in the way you're working and helps everybody accept the way of working."

"The mood is very good, everyone trains very hard during the week. When we win like we did on Saturday, we get a free day on the Sunday and it's obviously a nice feeling.

"We won in the right way, with good football. We got an early goal and were able to control the game. I don't think there were too many occasions where they looked like scoring."

Left wing-back Marcos Alonso was the surprise goal-scoring sensation - a first-half brace and even a sniff of a hat-trick. Courtois was impressed.

"He has a good quality shot. It is good that they feel the moment to go and score goals. It is very good for us.

"We had an amazing

run of winning 13 straight. I don't think we played a bad game at Tottenham - they scored in two key moments. If we'd scored the equaliser just after half-time, I think we would have gone on to win like we did at Manchester City. But they scored to make it 2-0 and it was difficult.

"Tottenham are a good team and they were able to control the game - they were better than us. But we know we have been doing well, we have been training well.

"But we had to react in the right way at Leicester and we did."

Can Chelsea go on another amazing run?

"I don't know, we will see," he said. "We will have to go game by game. The most important thing is we go to Liverpool (on January 31) with the biggest gap possible. This was a game that if I was sitting at home, I'd be thinking 'They're playing Leicester away and could drop points'."

"For us to win was a big boost and now we want to do the same against Hull on Sunday, so we have the gap at Anfield and there everything can happen. Hopefully we can win another 13 in a row but we will see."

Did the win send a message to Blues' title rivals?

"Yes. Just to see that we won 3-0, it shows that we don't stop and the loss at Spurs didn't affect us. Everybody hoped we'd drop points, so that was very good.

"Obviously if you're leading, you have the pressure of wanting to keep that gap.

"Thankfully for us, we are there, we have a seven-point gap.

"The pressure is more on the other teams than us but, obviously, we have to keep winning our games. We are in a good moment, things are going well.

"Last year we were having a rough time and it was harder to get things in our favour. So we will try to keep the momentum and win our games."

Barca-style Fulham

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many chances, kept another clean sheet and found the right balance during the game.

"I am happy with my team and we show ambi-

tion for the future and trying to get a place in the top six.

"Right now my whole focus is on the QPR game next weekend, when we have a chance to get another three points."

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SPORT

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Down and out? Diego Costa's Chelsea future is in doubt amid the lure of Chinese riches

Picture: Rob Newell



Fulham head coach Slavisa Jokanovic is looking ahead to the derby with QPR
Picture: Rob Newell



Fulham do it Barca-style

Focus on Craven Cottage

FULHAM go into Saturday's televised West London derby clash at Queens Park Rangers (12.30pm) in buoyant mood after a stylish 2-0 victory over Barnsley that propelled them to eighth place in the Championship.

Having won six of their last eight matches and lost just once, Whites are six points off the play-off places with a game in hand.

Chris Martin has swiftly gone from zero to hero at Craven Cottage, where he marked his return to the side by setting Fulham on the way to Saturday's win against Barnsley with a coolly converted penalty on the stroke of half-time, before setting up the other goal for Scott Malone, the left-back netting with a delightful far-post volley 10 minutes after the break.

It was the perfect all-round centre-forward's performance to suggest that Martin has now accepted that his immediate future lies in SW6, not back at Derby County.

As reported last week, Martin had hoped to terminate his season-long loan agreement with Fulham and return to Pride Park, where Rams' manager Steve McClaren was keen to accommodate his talents.

This came after it emerged that Martin and his agent had been rebuffed in their attempts to prise a pay increase from the Fulham hierarchy. It is claimed that when he joined Whites at the start of this season, Martin's wages increased from £14,000 to £17,000 per week. But it's alleged the player and his representative wanted Fulham to cough up £28,000 a week to keep him in West London.

Martin's immediate fate was sealed when Derby refused to meet Fulham's asking price to terminate the loan agreement – and, instead, signed striker David Nugent from Middlesbrough.

Maybe Martin felt he had a point to prove on Saturday. If so, he did it with aplomb, spearheading a swashbuckling Fulham side that produced their most accomplished performance of the season in a game they could have won by a cricket score.

Head coach Slavisa Jokanovic said: "He played for his team-mates and for Fulham. Everyone knows how important he is for us. We are trying to convince him to stay with us."

"Today he had a good performance and we are happy that he is back. I don't know why people ask me about Chris Martin so much, this is not his first game for Fulham. He did not refuse to play for us, he is a professional football player. He was a little bit confused with the situation and now he has a clear mind."

"I expect he will play for us in the future as well. This is the best situation for the club and player. I have made it clear he will be with us until the end of the season and that is it."

Talk of Fulham becoming the Barcelona of the Championship may be fanciful but there is no doubt that if Martin stays and can maintain his form, they have the ability to make the play-offs.

"I am proud of my players for today's performance," Jokanovic said. "We created

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China lure is poser for Costa

But Blues win in style at Leicester City without Diego

This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

By Paul Lagan

DIEGO Costa earns £4 million a year at Chelsea – in comes a club from China offering to ramp that up to £30 million a season provided he leaves SW6, pronto.

What should he do? It's a tough call. Costa, 28, born in Brazil but who gave up his citizenship to reap the riches of La Liga in Spain and to represent that country, now seems keen on a move away from megabucks Chelsea and into the clutches of ultra-megabucks Tianjin Quanjian.

There are less than two weeks of the January transfer window left and it remains to be seen where the Premier League's joint-leading scorer will be by then.

Chelsea are very keen to play down the schism that ruptured the Cobham training ground last week, when Costa allegedly claimed he was injured and had a row with a member of the medical staff. Head coach Antonio Conte supported his staff – and Costa was sent to train alone for the rest of the week and was promptly dumped out of the side for Saturday's emphatic 3-0 victory at Leicester City.

Chelsea continue to top the table, seven points clear of Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool, and Costa's team-mates are all trying to persuade him to stay – until the end of the season at least.

Blues host Hull City on Sunday and then face the daunting prospect of a trip to Anfield, followed by the visit of fellow championship-chasers Arsenal.

If Chelsea's board have not found a solution to the mire they have found

themselves in, then Blues' title rivals will have been handed a massive boost in their efforts to bridge the gap at the top.

Prior to the victory over the reigning champions at the King Power Stadium, thanks to a brace by Marcos Alonso and a header from livewire Pedro, the club had made a valiant, albeit futile, attempt to suggest that the furore was nothing more than a storm in a (China) tea cup. Costa had, indeed, been injured on Tuesday and didn't train for the rest of the week, hence his absence. Simple.

So with Costa unable to explain the situation, Conte put his reputation for honesty on the line when he said: "If you want to know the truth, I'm ready to tell the truth. On Tuesday during the training session Diego stopped because he felt a pain in his back. From that moment he didn't train during the week. For this reason he wasn't available for the starting 11 or the bench (against Leicester). This is the reason, the truth."

OK, but when asked if he'd had a row with Costa, Conte said: "I have read a lot of speculation about this topic. I can tell if there are problems – and I repeat, if – with players, I am used to solving them in the changing rooms, not outside, not in Press conferences."

So there you have it. The world's sports media reported a row and the club said that even if there was one, they would not reveal it. It now remains for any club that wants Costa to table a bid and see if it's accepted or not.

Meanwhile, Conte is still keen to land Swansea City's Spain striker Fernando Llorente.

While the coach still does not trust £32 million striker Michy Batshuayi to lead the line in Costa's absence, ex-Juventus striker Llorente is seen as the experienced replacement who would hit the ground running at Stamford Bridge.

The trouble is the board are keen for Conte to utilise the existing squad

rather than buy in. To that end, Patrick Bamford has been recalled from a loan spell sitting on the sidelines at Burnley to bolster Chelsea's options.

But if the board seriously believe that Bamford is the solution, then they haven't fully grasped the problem.

With Oscar having left to take up the ultra-lucrative offer from China, and with a host of other players from across the continent lured by the yuan, does Conte see China as a threat to the world dominance of the Premier League?

"Yes, I have seen this in the past," said the Italian. "Also in my squad. Oscar plays with us, then a good offer from China comes and he went."

"But I don't see a threat for my players. I think we are a great club and it's an honour to play for Chelsea."

"I understand about the money. When you play for a team like Chelsea, you must be pleased."

"The Premier League is really competitive. Every player wants to come to this league to play. It's the best in the world. For this reason, this offer I don't think is a threat for our league."

Keen to steer away from any potential Costa-related questions, Conte returned to the football and the fact Chelsea are seven points clear of their closest challengers.

Of the win at Leicester, he said: "It was a good reaction (to the Spurs defeat). When you win 13 games in a row and then arrive at the moment to touch a defeat, and then to restart, it is not easy. I know from when I was a footballer, I understand this psychological aspect is very important. We have started very well in the FA Cup and now in the league."

"Leicester were very tough, with good players and a good manager. To come here and to win is not easy, so I'm pleased."

Chelsea signed Leicester's N'Golo Kante in the summer for £30 million and

the Chelsea boss agreed the dynamic midfielder is one of the most influential players in the Premier League.

"I think N'Golo, for sure, is a very good player," said Conte. "He arrived at Chelsea and is playing very well. Don't forget that it is not easy when you change teams and arrive in a great team where expectations are very high. Sometimes the player can suffer from the pressure and not perform in the right way. But N'Golo has shown great personality and quality. I'm pleased to have him in my squad."

Two players suffering at present are Batshuayi and Ruben Loftus-Cheek. But Conte remains optimistic about the pair – in public at least.

"Batshuayi and Ruben are two players in my squad," he said. "I trust in all my players. Ruben, for sure, is a player with great quality. Now that Oscar has left, he might have the right space to show me and the club his potential."

"And for Michy to continue to work in this way, to show me that they deserve to play. I have no problem to play a young player."

Meanwhile, goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois is a very happy stopper at the moment.

Originally signed from Belgian club Genk for £5 million in 2010, the 24-year-old keeper has more than repaid Chelsea in loan fees generated by his successful extended spells in Spain with Atletico Madrid.

He is Mr Calm in front of the back five. Nothing seems to faze him, not even the prospect of losing Costa to China. Chelsea have won twice this season without their leading marksman.

Courtois said. "Diego didn't train since Tuesday and the manager had a plan in his head. We trained very well and we knew what to do. We played the same against AFC Bournemouth as well."

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